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Regional Oral History Office

California Wine Industry Oral History Project

Brother Timothy

THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS AS WINEMAKERS

With an Introduction by
Maynard A. Amerine

An Interview Conducted by
Ruth Teiser

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Brother Timothy

Being interviewed at Mont La Salle. Photograph by Catherine Harroun.

TABLE OF CONTENTS -- Brother Timothy

PREFACE	i
INTRODUCTION by Maynard A. Amerine	iii
INTERVIEW HISTORY	v
THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS	1
THE BEGINNING OF WINE MAKING AT MARTINEZ	4
THE MOVE TO MONT LA SALLE	10
THE BOYHOOD OF ANTHONY GEORGE DIENER	15
BROTHER TIMOTHY'S EARLY YEARS IN THE ORDER	18
THE MONT LA SALLE WINERY	22
BROTHER JOHN AND ALFRED FROMM	25
EARLY HISTORY OF THE MONT LA SALLE PROPERTY	28
WINE-MAKING TECHNOLOGY IN THE POST-REPEAL PERIOD	33
ALFRED FROMM AND MARKET EXPANSION	38
CHRISTIAN BROTHERS BRANDY	41
EXPANDING FACILITIES	44
THE ACQUISITION OF THE MOUNT TIVY WINERY	45
GREYSTONE CELLARS	50
THEODORE GIER'S ALBUM	57
CHRISTIAN BROTHERS CHAMPAGNE	66
CHRISTIAN BROTHERS WINES AND VINEYARDS	69
OTHER RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS THAT MAKE WINE	73

THE CALIFORNIA WINE INDUSTRY 74

GRACE AND THANKSGIVING PRAYERS 77

THE SOUTH ST. HELENA COMPLEX 79

WINERY SIZE AND WINE QUALITY 84

GRAPE AND WINE PRICES SINCE 1961 87

CORKS AND CAPS 91

CORKSCREWS 94

THE WINE MUSEUM 102

APPENDIX I The History of the Christian Brothers Wineries in California 105

APPENDIX II History of Greystone 122

APPENDIX III The Christian Brothers Wine and Champagne Cellars 123

APPENDIX IV The Napa Valley 131

APPENDIX V Harvest Luncheon 135

INDEX 137

(For Wines and Grapes see page 142)

PREFACE

The California Wine Industry Oral History Series, a project of the Regional Oral History Office, was initiated in 1969, the year noted as the bicentenary of continuous wine making in this state. It was undertaken through the action and with the financing of the Wine Advisory Board, and under the direction of University of California faculty and staff advisors at Berkeley and Davis.

The purpose of the series is to record and preserve information on California grape growing and wine making that has existed only in the memories of wine men. In some cases their recollections go back to the early years of this century, before Prohibition. These recollections are of particular value because the Prohibition period saw the disruption of not only the industry itself but also the orderly recording and preservation of records of its activities. Little has been written about the industry from late in the last century until Repeal. There is a real paucity of information on the Prohibition years (1920-1933), although some wine making did continue under supervision of the Prohibition Department. The material in this series on that period, as well as the discussion of the remarkable development of the wine industry in subsequent years (as yet treated analytically in few writings) will be of aid to historians. Of particular value is the fact that frequently several individuals have discussed the same subjects and events or expressed opinions on the same ideas, each from his own point of view.

Research underlying the interviews has been conducted principally in the University libraries at Berkeley and Davis, the California State Library, and in the library of the Wine Institute, which has made its collection of in many cases unique materials readily available for the purpose.

Three master indices for the entire series are being prepared, one of general subjects, one of wines, one of grapes by variety. These will be available to researchers at the conclusion of the series in the Regional Oral History Office and at the library of the Wine Institute.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons who have contributed significantly to recent California history. The office is headed by Willa K. Baum and is under the administrative supervision of James D. Hart, the Director of The Bancroft Library.

Ruth Teiser
Project Director
California Wine Industry
Oral History Series

1 March 1971
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley

INTRODUCTION

The Brothers of the Christian Schools congregation was originally and still exists as a teaching order. Brother Timothy makes clear that the present large wine and brandy business is carried on to support the teaching.

The Christian Brothers started their novitiate in Martinez in 1879. Some time later, possibly in 1882, they began to sell wine and have continued to do so ever since, including during Prohibition. In 1932 they moved their winery equipment and wines to their present winery near Napa. Their winery operations are conducted as a regularly commercial winery under the name Mont La Salle Vineyards. The profits from their operation, after taxes, etc., goes to the non-profit corporation, De La Salle Institute, which operates the Christian Brothers schools and educational work.

But, and justifiably so, this is the story of Brother Timothy (George Diener), his fellow brothers, and the operation of their wineries since 1935. To a certain extent it is the story of the devoted service of three men, Brothers Gregory, John, and Timothy.

Although he acknowledges the contributions of Fromm and Sichel it is obvious that the brothers themselves had a clear picture of the type of company which they wished to build--a Napa Valley oriented table wine industry, and a San Joaquin Valley oriented dessert wine and brandy production. He gives us a clear picture of why they produce certain types of wine (and how), of their blending concept, and why they use corks instead of screw caps as closures. There is even a section on his corkscrew collection, memories of James P. Howe and some "graces" that he has given. All in all a modest but revealing portrait of a devout man and his work. The one thing he should have told us was how hard he worked to make it go.

Brother Timothy gives credit to Brother John for the large scale expansion of their winery operations. Anyone who met Brother John will recognize that his tribute to his colleague's energy and ambition for the order is completely deserved. Brother John was the early dynamo behind their progress.

Brother Timothy also pays a graceful tribute to the influence of the research and teaching of the University of California. He indicates that ten or twelve members of their present technical staff were trained at the University of California or at Fresno State University.

An important part of the story of Christian Brothers wines is their contract with Fromm and Sichel, who since 1938 have merchandised their wines and brandies in forty-eight of the fifty states. Brother Timothy notes that their altar wine business is still conducted directly from the winery. He credits Alfred Fromm with the suggestion that they produce commercial brandy. He notes that it has always been a slightly sweet flavored brandy, but that in recent years lighter in flavor than at the start.

From 1940 to date Christian Brothers have continuously expanded their operations at Napa, north and south of St. Helena and at Reedley and Fresno in the San Joaquin Valley.

Brother Timothy modestly underplays his own very considerable part in this growth. Nevertheless, he was an innovative designer of equipment and processes for more efficient operations. Few if any of the many technological advances pioneered at their wineries did not have the assistance of Brother Timothy and, of course, none were made without his approval.

Brother Timothy is interested in the history of the vineyards and properties that Christian Brothers operate, especially in Theodore Gier at Napa. However interesting this may be historically it is not important. What is important is what Brother Timothy and his co-workers have made of those properties on their own. They have created them by themselves with very little assistance from history and they, not history, deserve the credit.

Maynard A. Amerine
Professor, Viticulture and
Enology

21 January 1975
101 Wickson Hall
University of California at Davis

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Brother Timothy, F.S.C., was born Anthony George Diener in New Jersey in 1910, the son of German-American parents. His family moved to Southern California when he was young, and he received his early education there and at the Christian Brothers high school in Oakland. In 1928 he joined the Christian Brothers order and later attended St. Mary's College, majoring in science. In 1931 he started teaching in the order's high schools in Northern California.

He had not been associated with the winery, although he had known of it and seen it during his novitiate at Martinez, and he had helped move it to Mont La Salle in 1931. Not until 1935 did he take an active part in the Christian Brothers wine making operations. That year he became winery chemist, then later added the duty of supervising the vineyards, then still later became supervisor of the winery and vice president of the winery corporation.

In this interview he reviewed briefly the history of the Christian Brothers, then at greater length the history of the order in California, then in detail the history of its wine making operations in this state. He also discussed many aspects of the California wine industry as a whole, including recent economic trends.

Brother Timothy speaks with serious regard for facts both large and small, and with care (perhaps learned during his days as a teacher) that what he says will be clearly understood. This conscientiousness, together with his personal cordiality, made the interviewing a light task and a pleasant experience.

All of the interviews took place in the offices of the Mont La Salle winery near Napa, the initial series on August 12, 16, and 18, 1971. The transcript of those interview sessions was sent to him to read over in January, 1973, and a final session took place on May 15, 1973. The entire text, slightly edited by the interviewer to eliminate some repetitions and clarify a few points, was sent to Brother Timothy on February 1, 1974.

Between the interview sessions, Brother Timothy had looked up material relating to the discussions. (Some of it is included in the appendices.) He edited the entire transcript with great care, changed a few words and added amplifying material. All final corrections were completed by July 31, 1974.

Ruth Teiser
Interviewer

21 January 1975
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California/Berkeley

(Interview #1, August 12, 1971)

THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS

Teiser: Would you care to start with the history of the Christian Brothers order?

Brother Timothy: Our order is a religious order, the fourth largest in the Catholic Church. The Jesuit order is in the number one position, the Franciscan second, the Salesians are third. We have more than 15,000 Christian Brothers throughout the world conducting schools for boys.*

Our order was founded in France in 1680 by Jean Baptiste de la Salle. He was a French priest and his canonization took place in the year 1900, so he has been called St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle since that time. Our first Mother House was, of course, in France, and then later it was moved to Belgium, and then later on to Rome. I think it was in 1934 that our Mother House was situated for the first time in Rome. So our Mother House is there in Rome now at the present time. The Superior General in charge of all the Brothers throughout the world has his office there.

It happens that we have an American Superior now, Brother Charles Henry. This Brother Charles Henry was born in Massachusetts and spent a lot of his time in New York. He's well known to us and we are well known to him as he has visited here in California a number of times. He's the first American to be Superior General. Most of our Superior Generals for the approximately 290 year history of the order have been French.

They used to be elected for life and now, however, it's more or less a ten-year span. Then the man may resign and a new man be elected at that time, or he may be re-elected for another term of office.

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*Recently girls as well. See p. 2.

Timothy: You may gather from what I have said so far that the order was founded specifically for educational purposes, and this is right. Our founder was struck by the difficulty of the young people of his time in developing into what you might call good citizens. They were pretty much neglected, and apparently little kids were running the streets of France 290 years ago with practically no education. They learned all the things that kids learn in the alleyways and all that kind of thing. They were, let's say, incapable for lack of education of doing any kind of work other than the menial jobs. There was really no educational system that was general throughout France for children of grammar school age. People that were wealthy had tutors to take care of their children and teach them something. But the children of what were called the artisans and poor were neglected unless some parish priest would set up some kind of a little parish school. But this was pretty much on his volition; either he did it or he didn't.

So there wasn't any general education system that was available to all. Our founder then started up what was almost a public school system. Brothers were trained and opened up schools throughout France. They depended on charity, as our Brothers always have worked without salary.

So from that start our order developed and spread through France and later into other parts of the world. The only other country that our order spread to in the lifetime of our founder was Italy. Our founder made sure to send one or two Brothers to Rome to be near the center of the Catholic Church, to be near the Pope. So that when the order was a very small thing, let's say, unrecognized, that it would gain some recognition by having a Brother or two in Rome.

The order has been engaged in educational work for boys throughout the history of the order, and it's been only in the last couple of years that any girls have been allowed in our schools. That's just one of those little things that happens to be a fact of life in the way our order started and in the way it has just recently begun to change a little bit.

Teiser: You're speaking of admitting women to St. Mary's?

Timothy: Yes. There are some coeds at St. Mary's College now. I understand the enrollments are going very well for the upcoming fall semester.

Timothy: Now the Christian Brothers came to the United States--I guess I may make that jump from the Old World over to this country--we came to the United States in 1845 for the first time. We started a school in Baltimore and then spread from there throughout this country. The Brothers came to California, San Francisco specifically, in 1868 and took over St. Mary's College which had been founded five years before and had been operated by members of the clergy. Priests were the teachers, and the Brothers were brought in only at this later date, five years after the college had been founded by Archbishop [Joseph Sadoc] Alemany. Perhaps he was just Bishop Alemany. I don't know if an archbishopric had been founded yet in San Francisco.*

He got the Brothers to come to California to take over St. Mary's College. It was out on Mission Road in San Francisco at that time. The Brothers, I believe about eight in number, came around by water. They came to Panama and then I understand that they transferred to a little train that ran across the Isthmus of Panama, and they got onto a different ship on the west coast and then came up the west coast to San Francisco.

The Brothers in St. Mary's College managed to get along all right. They had many difficult years with finances. With the growth of the college, they moved to Oakland. They had a major fire on the top floor of that building at one time and then at a later date, in 1928, they built St. Mary's College where it is now, near Moraga.

Well, the Christian Brothers, with their first school in California being St. Mary's College, shortly began to open up some other schools in various parts of the Bay Area and up and down the coast. Then, after having been in California for eleven years, the Brothers bought property at Martinez in 1879 and built a novitiate there. That novitiate operated there until 1932.

Teiser: Was this the first training installation for your own people?

Timothy: No, there was some other preliminary novitiate set up in one of the Brothers' schools in the Oakland area, but it was kind of temporary. When they bought property at Martinez in 1879, it was bought specifically as a novitiate site. Then a novitiate was built there.

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*In 1853 two dioceses were created in California, and Bishop Alemany then became archbishop of the northern one.

THE BEGINNING OF WINE MAKING AT MARTINEZ

Timothy: It happens that at this site there were twelve acres of grapes on the grounds, and one of the Brothers, either in 1879 or shortly thereafter, decided to see that those grapes didn't spoil, and so the story we have heard from several old Brothers (and one of them gave it to us in writing) was that a Brother Cecilian took an old water trough that had been used for watering horses (and if so I hope he scrubbed it out) [laughter] and put the grapes in it and used a big wooden club to crush the grapes. Then, of course, drain off the juice, collect the juice, and ferment it separately.

Some boys in the neighborhood who watched them work with this big wooden club nicknamed the club "the mule's leg." [Laughter] So this club was quite like a branch of a tree that looked like the leg of a mule.

Now, a Brother who is still living on this property, Brother Basil, knew this Brother Cecilian, who died in 1917, and Brother Basil says that Brother Cecilian went down to the hardware store and bought a new wooden trough. So he did not use the old trough that had been used for watering the horses, according to Brother Basil's version of the story. [Laughter]

Teiser: Was Brother Cecilian from Europe?

Timothy: This Brother Cecilian happened to be from Ireland.

Teiser: So he didn't know how to make wine!

Timothy: So I don't know if he really knew how to make wine, but of course I've never seen a sample of that wine that he made at that time. I'm sure it was not near as good as the kind of wine that is being made in California today.

This Brother Cecilian was supervised by Brother Victorick, and there was also a Brother Azarie. One of these other gentlemen might have been the brains behind the job. Brother Cecilian might have been just the fellow that handled the big wooden club. We haven't got that clear as to whether this Brother Cecilian was really capable of making wine on his own or whether he took instructions from Brother Victorick or Brother Azarie.

Timothy: Now, since I've mentioned Martinez and we're right in the middle of this discussion of how the wine was first made by the Brothers there, I might say that Justin Meyer has written up a history of the operations of the Christian Brothers' winery and he researched things quite well.*

In this research that Justin Meyer did, in attempting to find out whether 1879 was the year that this Brother Cecilian crushed those first grapes at Martinez or whether it might have been 1880 or 1881 or 1882--in the research done, we have found out that 1882 was the date of incorporation of De La Salle Institute. We have, I think, the old original certificate of incorporation.

Teiser: I see.

Timothy: Our De La Salle Institute was founded at that time, and made a State of California corporation, registered in the State records in 1882.

Teiser: What was the purpose of its incorporation?

Timothy: Well, the purpose of incorporation was just to have a legal entity to operate the Martinez property, the novitiate, the so-called farms that included these grapes and the winery. And some dairy cows were on the property and one thing and the other. Just to be incorporated and, you know, have a legal right to your own name or something like that, I guess.

Teiser: Carry on business, I suppose.

Timothy: Yes, to carry on business. Although in studying that old certificate, the word wine or the word grapes doesn't appear on it as far as I can recall.

Then in another one of these little areas of research Justin Meyer found a sheet of paper all typed out purporting to give a kind of summary of the history of the Brothers' winery operations at Martinez. This was unsigned. It had some initials at the bottom but we never have been able to figure out whose initials they were. It mentioned that the Brothers started in the wine business in 1891 in Martinez.

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*Appendix I. Justin Meyer was formerly Brother Justin.

Timothy: However, in other work done by Justin Meyer he uncovered some other notes saying that the first crusher for crushing grapes at the winery was bought in 1887. So you would hardly buy that first crusher for commercially crushing grapes before you began to be in the wine business, you know. We have assumed that perhaps this "1891" typed out might have been a typographical error. It might have been a typo for 1881.

Now since De La Salle Institute, our parent corporation, was incorporated in 1882, we have been habitually saying for a long time that the Christian Brothers started in the wine business in 1882.

Teiser: A question arises. Back in your discussion when your order--is that the right term for it?

Timothy: In official technical language, I guess you would say that the Christian Brothers is a religious congregation. However we have commonly used the world "order."

Teiser: I see. When the order or congregation entered the wine business, do you think it would have been at first a matter of making wine for the group's own use, and then making it perhaps for other Catholic groups, and then later selling it? Do you know anything of the progression of it?

Timothy: Yes. The first wine made by the Brothers at Martinez was, let's say, merely to save those grapes so that they didn't rot, and just for home consumption. Just for the Brothers to use themselves. You might even say it was thought to be experimental. They wanted to find out if they could make wine. Now apparently it was somewhat successful, and after perhaps a couple of years the members of the clergy in the local area and the neighbors began to come by and ask if they could buy some wine. So sales were made at the winery and the winery began to grow a little bit.

This growth continued right on up to Prohibition time, and then you might say that we continued to grow through the Prohibition period too, in that we were given permission to continue to produce sacramental wine. We were also given permission to make sales of medicinal wine sold on doctor's prescription throughout the whole Prohibition period.

So we have a continuous uninterrupted history of wine production since the day we started at Martinez.

Teiser: I'm quite sure this is not true, but I'll ask it: Was the fact that the wine was made by a Catholic organization sufficient to make it meet the standards of sacramental wine?

Timothy: Well, sacramental wine may be made by let's say even an atheist. There is nothing sacred about the man who makes it.

Teiser: But are the methods standard?

Timothy: The sacramental wine in the Catholic Church, as I understand it, is merely required to be made 100 per cent from grapes. That is, it must be pure grape wine. Any berries or cherries or something that is not a grape would, let's say, cause it to be invalid. So it's just pure grape wine. There is a limitation on the limit of alcohol. It should not be higher than 18 per cent alcohol. So a fortified wine, say above 18 per cent alcohol, is invalid as an altar wine. At least in the minds of some theologians. There are those who will say that it is illicit after it goes above the 18 per cent alcohol reading. It may be illicit but still valid. So there is a difference of opinion among theologians on that subject, but in general safe and sane guidelines are any pure grape wine not over 18 per cent alcohol is a valid sacramental wine in the Catholic Church.

Teiser: Dr. Maynard Joslyn, who I think said that he had gone into this matter for the book on sweet wines,* was talking about wines for use in Jewish congregations, and I believe he told me that your wines were at least to the standards of kosher wines. Do you know that?

Timothy: No, I don't know much about kosher wines. However I have met a rabbi whom I have gotten acquainted with and know pretty well, who told me (and I don't know if he has a very modern forward looking sect in his church or not) that there is no such thing as kosher wine, or there is no such thing as regulations for kosher wine. He gave me to understand that it's pretty much up to the individual rabbi as to what he wants to authorize. That's different than what I had heard from other people before. He is Dr. Leo Trepp, located right here at Napa.**

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*Joslyn, M.A. and Amerine, M.A. Dessert, Appetizer and Related Flavored Wines, Berkeley: University of California, Division of Agricultural Sciences, 1964.

**Rabbi of Beth Shalom Temple and an instructor at Napa College.

9/15/69 -- Copy of Pages 8 and 9 of the "Ledger" (so marked on outside binding) or "Cash Book" kept by th Christian Brothers at Martinez, and covering all their years there, 1879 to 1932 inclusive. Entry of March 1, 1880 "Grapevines $3.75" is earliest known written record covering anything that may have had connection with the beginnings of the Christian Brothers' winery. Book is in the care of Brother Veroniu Henry.

Brother Timothy Diener

Cash Book

1880				
Feb.	25	Amt's. Brot. over	$ 110475	$ 1142 22
"	"	To Cash from B. Hosea	100.00	
	26	By Fish & Vegetables		1 00
		" Express		35
Mar.	1	" Shoe mending		350
"	"	" J. Hoey for Grocery		400
"	"	" Butcher		1700
"	"	" Grapevines		375
"	"	" Baker		1600
"	"	" Milk		725
"	"	" Telegram & Stamps		50
"	"	" Sticking Plaster		25
"	7	" Charley Armstrong mdse		1200
"	"	" Dr. Corothus for J. Usher		250
"	11	" Fare to S. F.		200
"	"	" Alarm Clock		350
"	"	To Cash from B. Hosea	53.50	
"	12	To " " "	15.50	
"	"	" " " B. Visitor	14.50	
		Amt's forwarded	$ 1288.25	1215 82

Cash Book

1880				
Mar.	13	Amt's. Brot. over	$ 1288.25	1215 82
"	"	By Mc Mahon for Plastering		53 50
"	"	" Orangetrees & Nails		2 75
"	16	" Orangetrees & Nails		2 50
"	18	" Lemon & c trees		6 40
April	1	" Milk		16 95
"	"	" Butcher		19 40
"	"	" Baker		5 35
"	"	" Groceries		80
"	"	" Express		
"	5	To Cash from B Hosea	50.00	
"	12	By Charley Armstrong		5 00
"	"	" Seeds		35
"	"	" Freight & Drayage		1 10
"	"	" 3 Pair Shoes		9 00
"	20	" Sundries		90
"	21	" Fare to S F		1 50
"	28	To Cash from B. Hosea	60.00	
"	30	By Butcher		24 25
"	"	" Baker		17 70
		Amts. forwarded	$ 1398.25	1383 21

Teiser: I know there was a good deal of wine distributed during Prohibition to synagogues, and I wondered if you were one of the suppliers.

Timothy: Well, really I don't know. You know we were continuously in the wine business through the whole Prohibition period, and apparently our Brothers behaved themselves and were in good repute with the Internal Revenue Service people who enforced the law, and they permitted the Brothers all through the Prohibition period to produce sacramental wines and the medicinal wines sold at the prescription counter in the drugstore. You needed a prescription from your doctor and then you could get a bottle of wine or a bottle of brandy or a bottle of scotch or bourbon. So apparently if you were a favored patient of your doctor and you took good care of your doctor's bills, why [laughter] those were probably some of the prerequisites before you got that kind of a prescription.

Teiser: What types of wines were made prior to Prohibition in Martinez, do you know?

Timothy: I think they were mostly table wines. I believe the Brothers produced almost exclusively table wines before Prohibition. I think it was quite likely during Prohibition that the Brothers began to either buy and resell a little dessert wine or to produce a little dessert wine of their own at that time by buying brandy and fortifying those wines. The Brothers did not have a still during the Martinez days when the winery was at Martinez. There was no still anywhere on the Brothers' property at that time.

Here's an interesting old thing. This is a xerox copy of page eight and nine out of the cash book of the Christian Brothers at Martinez when they were operating as De La Salle Institute. It is in the archives of the Christian Brothers; I believe it's at St. Mary's College Library at the present time. This old ledger indicates on page eight that the Brothers on March 1, 1880, spent $3.75 for grape vines. Now this seems to be the earliest mention that we can find in print or in any old ledger of grape vines or of wine at the Martinez property.

I don't know how many grape vines they might have bought for $3.75, but in those days they may have gotten several hundred. I would think that grape vines, rooted plants ready to plant, in those days did not cost any more than about a penny apiece.

I recall in my time in the last thirty-seven years, some time between 1935 and the present time, that we bought grape vines for

Shipment No._____ Serial No._____

Oct. , 1931

MANUFACTURER and CONSIGNOR

LA SALLE PRODUCTS, Inc.
MARTINEZ, CALIF.

Permit No. California A—~~851~~ 925-

Kind of Liquor California Wine

Date Manufactured 1925-

Quantity _____ Wine Gallons Alcoholic Content 19

Consignee LA SALLE PRODUCTS, Inc.

To LA SALLE PRODUCTS, Inc.
~~ST. LOUIS, MO.~~
San Francisco .

Permit No. ~~Missouri A—41~~
Cal. A. 883.

KIELTY & DAYTON, S. F.--7226

Shipment No._____ Serial No._____

193____

MANUFACTURER and CONSIGNOR

LA SALLE PRODUCTS, Inc.
MARTINEZ, CALIF.

Permit No. California A—851

Kind of Liquor California Wine

Date Manufactured _____

Quantity _____ Wine Gallons Alcoholic Content _____

Consignee LA SALLE PRODUCTS, Inc.

To LA SALLE PRODUCTS, Inc.
MILWAUKEE, WIS.

Permit No. Wisconsin A—18

KIELTY & DAYTON, S. F.--7226

Timothy: about thirty dollars a thousand, rooted grape vines ready to plant, resistant rootstock, you know, for about three cents apiece, prior to World War II.

There's an old shipping tag indicating that the name the Brothers operated under at Martinez at this particular time and during Prohibition was La Salle Products, Inc., Martinez, California. Now someone wrote in "1925" as the date on this shipping tag, but apparently they didn't make the shipment. It shows the alcoholic content 19 per cent. Printed on this card it showed that this shipping tag was to be used on shipments made to La Salle Products, Inc., St. Louis, Missouri. Then someone scratched out the St. Louis, Missouri, and put San Francisco in there. Below this* I have another one of these same cards where no one made any handwritten inscription and it shows at the bottom that this was to be used for shipments made to La Salle Products, Inc., Milwaukee, Wisconsin. So this gives you, let's say, some documentation of the fact that during Prohibition the Christian Brothers were making shipments of wine to St. Louis and to San Francisco and to Wisconsin.

I have a little price list from La Salle Products, Inc., Martinez, California. The listing is all in fifty-two gallon, twenty-eight gallon or ten gallon barrels. So all of this was bulk sales in oak cooperage.

Teiser: What was the date of that? Do you know?

Timothy: Well, I don't have a date for this. It was during Prohibition. Since they listed these small barrels in the different sizes, this was undoubtedly intended for the altar wine trade. A clergyman or a parish in those old days would buy in any one of these barrel sizes from ten gallons on up to fifty-two gallon size, and then they would do their own bottling. So undoubtedly at this time the Brothers were not doing very much bottling, if any.

Teiser: I see.

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*On the Xerox copy; see illustration opposite.

THE MOVE TO MONT LA SALLE

Timothy: When we acquired this property just outside of Napa from Theodore Gier, we found that there was a little still on the property along with the old stone winery, and about 150 acres of vineyard out of a total acreage of 338. Now the Brothers acquired this from him in 1930 during Prohibition; also during the Depression. Mr. Gier was rather hard pressed financially and though he loved this property, and considered it to be his home property, he just felt forced to sell. I believe that he sold this property to the Brothers for $50,000, only $10,000 of which the Brothers had in cash. For the other $40,000 they traded him several apartment or rental properties that the Brothers had in the Oakland area.

Now Theodore Gier has two daughters still living in the East Bay, in Oakland.

Teiser: Do you remember their names?

Timothy: Mrs. Elsa Boone* and Miss Amelie Gier.

Teiser: What was the vineyard that you came into then?

Timothy: When the Brothers acquired this property, Gier had some Cabernet Sauvignon in. He had Sylvaner Riesling--well the grape commonly called Sylvaner. (That same grape is also secondarily called Franken Riesling.) Some Johannisberg Riesling was here, and the grape that is properly called Pinot St. George was here on the property at that time.

Teiser: So he had not been growing them to ship?

Timothy: No, these were all wine grapes.

Teiser: During Prohibition so many people converted their vineyards to grape varieties that would ship...

Timothy: Well, there was one other variety on the property that you might say was the kind of thing that would be sold to the home winemakers for adding a lot of color to a wine or to help stretch out something else. A grape called Alicante Ganzin. There was a small acreage

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*Mrs. Elsa Boone died in 1972.

Timothy: of that on the property. It's probably the most intensely colored red grape that you can find. It was very dark. We used to sometimes laugh about it and we'd say, "Well, you can crush that and then take it and paint the barn with it." It was so red that it would make a red barn. [Laughter] But we pulled all those out. I don't think you can find an Alicante Ganzin vine on this property any longer. But there was about ten to twelve acres of it when Theodore Gier had the place.

I understand from Mr. August Benkiser, who was the vineyard foreman for Gier and then also the vineyard foreman for the Christian Brothers when we first took over the vineyards, that the way this Alicante Ganzin got into the vineyard was that it had been grafted on top of a good wine variety grape with the start of Prohibition. So that it was specifically planted, let's say, for the home wine making trade.

Teiser: How did the order happen to decide to come here from Martinez?

Timothy: The Brothers were feeling a bit crowded at Martinez. The novitiate had been growing; the buildings were getting kind of full. The city of Martinez was growing out close to the front of the buildings. The Brothers had actually sold off a little bit of property and allowed some of this encroachment in order to raise a little money. They felt that the city was too close to them and that they should have more privacy for the novices. In those days the theory was that a religious order, particularly for the training of the young men just entering the order, should have privacy, seclusion, that kind of thing. So the Brothers were looking for new property that would be somewhat remote, somewhat secluded, and that would have a winery on it, that would have some vineyard present, and a suitable site on which they could build a new novitiate.

So the Brothers were actually looking all around the Bay Area. I know that they looked as far south as Mission San Jose and they looked throughout Sonoma County, several sites in Sonoma County. They must have looked at some places that I don't know about. Then they found this spot, and they stopped looking. This place looked so pretty to them and had an abundant water supply, which was one of the basic criteria that they were looking for. The water at Martinez was just full of rusty material, full of iron, not very satisfactory. It was loaded with minerals, and the quantity of water at Martinez was also very small. So they had this very much on their mind that any new location had to have a very good water supply and then should

Timothy: preferably have the other things that I mentioned, winery and vineyards.

There was a two-year overlap period. I have mentioned that this property was acquired in 1930. I've mentioned that the property at Martinez was closed down in 1932. During this two-year period the Brothers constructed the novitiate buildings here. They are quite commodious and they are built of reinforced concrete. The buildings are quite attractively done in the Mission style, or you could call it early California style if you want to--something like that.

The buildings were built mostly in 1931, completed early in '32, so that in April of '32 the Brothers had their official house moving and house opening, opening the house here and closing down the property at Martinez.

Teiser: What is this building called that we're in now?

Timothy: Well, this is our main office, the office for Mont La Salle Vineyards, and is located at Mont La Salle on Redwood Road, six miles off the freeway and let's say about eight miles from the center of Napa.

Teiser: In the lobby you have a very interesting display on the history of the order and also...

Timothy: Yes, we have a few books there telling something of the history of the religious order. The proper name for the religious order is The Brothers of the Christian Schools. We are very commonly called the Christian Brothers.

The display in the lobby upstairs includes some books, as I have just said, a few photos, and then some stamps from eight different countries, commemorative stamps honoring the Brothers or some of our institutions or our founder, St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle. The countries represented in that collection, if I can recall all eight, are the Philippines, Monaco, France, Belgium, Brazil, Equador, Nicaragua, and Panama.

Teiser: In all of those the Brothers have schools, I presume?

Timothy: Yes.

Teiser: Are there any other wineries operated by the Brothers?

Timothy: Well, California is the only place where we have wineries that

Timothy: amount to anything. The Brothers have attempted to get into the wine business in several other areas of the world and generally it has not been very successful. Their commercial efforts just haven't been successful. I believe that on the west coast of South America, the Brothers own about 100 or 150 acres of vineyard but then sell the grapes to some other winery.

Teiser: What country is that?

Timothy: It's either Peru or Chile. The Brothers there had wanted to get into the wine business and had just not felt competent to even start. We had advised them that the right way to get started would be to send some bright young man who speaks English, and that kind of thing, to the University of California at Davis. And start that way with the proper technological background before attempting, let's say, to start a winery by correspondence, or also that this might be a better way than for us to attempt to send someone to them and attempt to train somebody there. The training that a person would get at Davis would be so much better than what we could give there that there would be no comparison. However, they just haven't had the right talent available to them. They have not begun to implement this thing of starting a winery there. They're still, I believe, just selling those grapes to some winery.

I might mention in passing that when we moved to Mont La Salle the city of Martinez owned the ferry boat that went across from Martinez to Benicia. Since this was a municipal ferry, and either because the city of Martinez was very friendly with the Brothers and liked them very much or because they were glad to see them leave town--for one reason or another--the city of Martinez gave the Brothers free passage across that ferry with all of their household furnishings, all the wine from the winery, all the casks and wine tanks, just everything that the Brothers moved away from Martinez to Mont La Salle. They went across that ferry free of charge. [Laughter]

Teiser: What happened to the property in Martinez then?

Timothy: The property at Martinez was sold off and subdivided, and it is now just part of the residential area of Martinez. It's one mile east of the courthouse in Martinez. Well, it used to be at the end of Pine Street; I think Pine Street was continued on through the property.

The Brothers had bought the property in 1879 from a Mr. Bush. There's an old newspaper clipping in which Mr. Bush's

Timothy: name is mentioned. One writer says it was seventy acres and another writer reports it as seventy-six acres. And there were twelve acres of vineyards on it. This family also had a cherry orchard about a mile and a half or two miles away in, I guess, Alhambra Valley. So they had other property nearby.

Now I might mention this too in passing that [laughing] (I hate to admit to how old I am or give any clues) I entered the order at Martinez in 1928, during Prohibition. The Depression hadn't started yet, but I remember the Martinez property then. The old winery. I remember all of this in good detail, as I was young at that time and prowled around the property there quite a lot.

I had just one visit through the winery during the, oh, about fourteen months that I spent at the novitiate. (A couple of months as a postulant and a year as a novice.) Since this was Prohibition, Brother Raphael, who was in charge of the winery in those years, was very careful not to let too many visitors or anybody unauthorized wander around in that winery, particularly the young people. I was say about seventeen and a half or eighteen years old at the time.

The novices were not permitted to go through the winery generally. However, one of my older brothers got married shortly after I had entered the novitiate. He came on his honeymoon to see me with his bride, and so we showed them around a little bit. Then we asked permission to look at the winery and permission was granted. Brother Raphael showed the three of us around through the winery and then he said, "Brother Ulfinian would like to see you at the office." The office, of couse, was down in the school buildings. Brother Ulfinian was kind of the bookkeeper and the director of the house in charge of things like the over-all supervision of the winery and the supervision of Brother Raphael's work. So we went down there to his room, and this Brother Ulfinian met my brother and his bride and poured a little glass of wine for them. However, he didn't give me any because I was both under-age and I was a novice. So I didn't taste the wine at that time. [Laughter] A very small glass of wine was offered, let's say, to the bride and groom.

Teiser: [Laughter] That's really nice. Were you interested in the winery when you saw it at that time?

Timothy: Oh, I was interested in the winery, yes. I was curious about a lot of things, but at that time nobody knew how long Prohibition

Timothy: was going to last. You know it might have lasted the rest of our life for all we knew. This was the year 1928 when Al Smith ran for office, tried for the presidency and of course didn't get enough votes to win. Al Smith was running on a wet platform as you might call it. If Al Smith had been elected, perhaps we would have had Repeal four years earlier.

In 1932 though, when Franklin Roosevelt ran for office and won, he saw to it that Repeal came around rather soon. Then the official end of Prohibition took place late in '33.

THE BOYHOOD OF ANTHONY GEORGE DIENER

Teiser: Since you brought yourself into the story here, would you care to tell something about your own personal background?

Timothy: Yes, yes, I think I might as well. This is probably as good a point as any to put something into the record. My family name or baptismal name is Anthony George Diener, D-i-e-n-e-r. German extraction, one hundred per cent as far as I know. I was born in Elizabeth, New Jersey, in 1910. [Laughing] (I should say that quietly.) The folks lived there. My dad had worked as a tailor in New York. He was also sort of an amateur beekeeper, and he had several other jobs. However, in 1918 my mother's health was not very good, had not been good for about eight years or so, I guess since about the time I was born. And doctors there in New Jersey (in that day and age medicine wasn't what it is today) they told her she had consumption, that she didn't have long to live. Some parts of New Jersey were below sea level and they said that she should move to a higher elevation into a less humid climate.

My Uncle Al was already living in Oxnard, in Southern California. He was a brother of my dad and he talked our folks into moving west. We came and arrived in Los Angeles in June of 1918. My dad then looked around with my uncle to find a place to open up a business. He had been a tailor, so he had some old knowledge of fabrics and of clothing. He settled on a little clothing store, or what you might call a dry goods store, in the little town of Cucamonga, in the wine country of Southern California. So that's how we got to California.

I was about seven and a half years old, something like that. I attended school for one year in Los Angeles at St. Agnes' parish

Brother Gregory Schiefelbein, F.S.C.

Brother S. John Hoffman, F.S.C.

Timothy: school. I attended one year of school, the fourth grade, in Pomona, California. Then a new grammar school was built in Ontario, California, and I attended the last four years of grammar school there. It was while I was in grammar school that I got acquainted with Philo Biane whom I know you have interviewed already.

Teiser: Yes.*

Timothy: We're old schoolmates and old buddies from 'way back. We were in the same class together so we're about the same age. We used to pal around as little kids in the Cucamonga area.

Well, when I graduated from grammar school my dad decided to send me to a boarding high school, to St. Mary's High School in Oakland, then located in what we sometimes facetiously called the "old brick pile." St. Mary's College and St. Mary's High School were located together in these old brick buildings on Broadway Street. Since they were of brick construction and massive buildings, the kids called the old place the "old brick pile."

I then went to school there for a year and a half, my freshman year and half of my sophomore year in high school. Philo Biane and I came together to enroll in the freshman class. I left there after a year and a half, however, and he continued longer. I transferred to Cathedral High School in Los Angeles in the middle of my sophomore year because my dad and mother and the rest of the family moved in from Cucamonga to Glendale. I guess in late 1925. On February 1, 1926, I started to school at Cathedral High School. I graduated from there two and a half years later.

It happens that I was in school there with Brother Gregory who is my boss now. He is the president** of our Mont La Salle Vineyards. (I'm a vice-president of this Mont La Salle Vineyards.) So Brother Gregory, whom I knew in high school as Hubert Schiefelbein, is now my boss.

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*Biane, Philo. Wine Making in Southern California and Recollections of Fruit Industries, Ltd., an interview in this series completed in 1972.

**Brother Gregory resigned from the presidency September 28, 1971, after having suffered a stroke. Brother Frederick was elected president on September 30, 1971.

Timothy: It was common in those old days in religious orders for a name change to take place when you entered the order. The name was either assigned to you or you were given some choice in selecting a name, and so that's how people like, say, Anthony Diener, became Brother Timothy, or somebody like Hubert Schiefelbein became Brother Gregory. In most religious orders now, particularly the Christian Brothers, the young men entering do not have such a name change. They merely continue with their baptismal name and their family name; "Brother" is merely inserted ahead of their name.

Teiser: Was the name choice in your time generally after someone you admired or knew of?

Timothy: Oh, yes and no. In the time when I entered the novitiate they would ask you to give a list of maybe three names in order of preference. Perhaps you would select the name of someone you'd admired and put that name in the list. Well, maybe you got one of those three names that you suggested as your preference and maybe you didn't. I had not suggested the name Timothy at all, but it was assigned to me.

Teiser: I see.

Timothy: They had reasons in those days. I don't know if they would seem strange today, but our order had kind of blocked out the whole world in sections, and names were assigned in California on the basis that the first of your two religious names had to start with some letter from "r" to the end of the alphabet. And then, even more refined than that, they had certain names listed and your name had to come out of this list that was prepared, say, by the Mother House in Rome. It was kind of a code you might say. If a Brother showed up in Rome or if some correspondence came from him, no matter what part of the world he wrote from, as soon as they saw his name they would know what district he came from. If a Brother was transferred and became permanently assigned to a different district than where he had received the robe, you could tell this by the fact that his name was in the different part of the alphabet than most of the other Brothers in that district who had received their robe in the district where he was now living.

It was kind of a strange thing, but now that doesn't exist any more.

BROTHER TIMOTHY'S EARLY YEARS IN THE ORDER

Teiser: Did you decide to enter the novitiate immediately from high school?

Timothy: Yes. Immediately on graduation from high school I went to Martinez to enter the novitiate. I did this within about seven or eight days of the time that I graduated. In the last year of high school I had made up my mind that I would go and enter the novitiate at Martinez and become a Brother. Of course I thought of being a teacher. I had no idea at that time, particularly since it was Prohibition time too, that I would ever wind up in the wine business.

I entered at Martinez. I had that fourteen months approximately of postulancy and novitiate there. I was then transferred, as all young Brothers on completion of their novitiate were transferred, to St. Mary's College for college work. I had two years of college, which was all they would give you in those days because they needed the Brothers out in school. Then I started to teach school.

I taught high school chemistry and high school English and high school religion for one year at Sacramento at the Christian Brothers high school, where it used to be, on 21st and Broadway. (We used to call it 21st and Y.) That was my first year of teaching. I taught for three years at St. Mary's High School, teaching the same general subjects, from 1932 to 1935. In the summer of '35 I was transferred to Mont La Salle.

Since I had been teaching high school chemistry, one of our superiors came to me early in 1935 and asked me if I would like to go and work at the winery as the wine chemist. He told me to think it over for about a month and consult with my folks, and that about a month from that date he would be back and would then want my decision.

So I consulted with my parents and my brothers and sisters and nobody raised any objections. Then some time early in 1935 I told Brother Gregory that I would be happy to. (Now, this is a different Brother Gregory than the present Brother Gregory who is here. We do have problems like that of duplicate names.) This Brother Gregory, who was the Provincial in charge of all the Brothers in this San Francisco province, came back after that thirty-day period and I told him that, yes, I would be happy to go to the winery and see what I could do to help out up there.

Timothy: I started on the job on July 1, 1935.

Teiser: Had you had a special interest in chemistry?

Timothy: Yes, in my formative years and in my studies in school and college, I always had a great interest in what you might call the natural sciences, biology, zoology and chemistry. I loved all the natural sciences, all the things that had to do with the physical world, the things you could see and feel and all this kind of thing. I studied both zoology and chemistry at St. Mary's College. I was expecting to teach biology as well as chemistry, but most of our high schools dropped the biology subject about the time I was starting to teach. So then I taught chemistry.

Teiser: When you were asked about taking a position here, would the Provincial have asked you to consult with your family so seriously if it were just a move to another high school? Or was it that the wine business had a special aura at the time?

Timothy: Well, you've got a very real solid question there, and it's like this: Prohibition was one of those things that had been enforced for, you know, a number of years. A large part of my life, and maybe the most important part of my life at that time, had been spent during the Prohibition period. He may have thought that either I or my parents had some, let's say, opposition to working at a winery, handling wine and that kind of thing. The prohibitionist sentiment was strong in some families, particularly Catholic families. I would say that in my own family it was kind of a moderate thing. My family wasn't really opposed to alcoholic beverages during the Prohibition years. However, my dad and my mother were quite rigorous law abiding citizens. They didn't want to do anything illegal, that kind of thing, so it was very, very seldom that I saw anything in the way of an alcoholic beverage around our home.

Teiser: Had they both been born in this country?

Timothy: Yes. Both were born in Elizabeth, New Jersey, the same place where all of the children, my brothers and sisters and I were all born. You know I think there might be one exception to that. My oldest sister was born in New York.

Teiser: How many sisters and brothers have you?

Timothy: I have two sisters, both a bit older than I am, and four brothers. I'm in the middle of the four brothers.

Teiser: I see. So when you had to consult your family, you had a whole group of people to consult. [Laughter]

Timothy: [Laughter] Oh, yes, you might say it's a large family. Now my mother and my father have passed away, but all my brothers and sisters are still living. All at this moment are living in California, so they are not too far away.

I guess I'm the farthest north, and my oldest sister, who happens to be a Maryknoll nun, is the farthest south, if you'll say Monrovia is the farthest south. I have my brother Joe, next younger than I, who is living in Glendale, California. Two brothers of mine, one younger and one older, are living west of Fresno. One brother older than I is living in the mountains of Pinecrest, California.

Teiser: It seems to me that I read that you yourself had helped the Brothers move the winery here from Martinez.

Timothy: Oh, yes. This is true. One summer vacation period between semesters, I was assigned to go from St. Mary's College back to Martinez for about a month or so to help Frank Sommer, an old Austrian cooper whose widow still lives in Napa* by the way--I helped Frank Sommer there for about a month to load a truck and then to ride on that truck and transport staves and headboards and bottom boards of wine tanks, and staves of casks, to transport these things from Martinez up here to Mont La Salle. So I was physically involved in some of this tank and cask moving. Some of these things that went across that Martinez ferry on a no-charge basis. [Laughter]

Teiser: Did you have large wine stocks to move?

Timothy: I think that the total inventory at Martinez that was moved up here was about 240,000 gallons.**I believe that I came across that old figure somewhere in some old record. I've wondered whatever happened to it and I haven't been able in recent years to find that old record.

Teiser: By the time you moved here it was quite clear that Prohibition was coming to an end, was it not?

Timothy: Yes. Of course, they bought the property in 1930. I don't know

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*Mrs. Sommer died December 25, 1972.

**"Please footnote where I said 240,000 gallons may have been moved from Martinez to Mont La Salle. I am inclined to believe that the 54,000 gallons mentioned by Justin Meyer (page 109) may be the more reliable figure. The 240,000 gallons may have been the total capacity of the Martinez winery, including fermenting tanks." Brother Timothy.

Timothy: if it was clear in 1930 that Prohibition was going to come to an end as quickly as it did. But by the date the Brothers then settled here permanently, in April of '32, there must have been pretty good thought that Prohibition was near the end.

Well, naturally the Brothers had all voted for Al Smith in 1928, and I might say too that I believe the Brothers were all praying for Repeal. And then I think most of the Brothers voted for Franklin Roosevelt too. Of course, he had a lot of personal magnetism, and particularly in 1932 he went over with a tremendous big margin of victory in the voting. That was my first year to vote in a presidential election, 1932, since I had been twenty-one for a little less than a year at the time of the election.

So I came to Mont La Salle in 1935. I've been on the same job ever since, without a raise of pay or without a promotion, so perhaps I'm in a rut. [Laughter] I've been thirty-six years or more on one job. [Laughter]

Teiser: You've made a lot of wine, though.

Timothy: Yes, I think we've made a lot of wine.

Teiser: Let me go back. Was it the intent from the beginning that whatever profits should be made from the wine should go to support the schools?

Timothy: Yes, certainly. Yes, let's say, this would be an almost obvious fact that any religious order like ours being in any kind of business like this wine and brandy business has a purpose of developing this revenue for the educational work of the order. So now it happens that in various parts of the world several other religious orders are in the wine business here and there. Now their main reason for starting in the wine business might be to produce sacramental wines for the use of the clergy, but once you are producing some sacramental wine it's quite a natural move to make some wine available, say, to the commercial trade or to make it available in the general market, or anywhere like that you prefer.

THE MONT LA SALLE WINERY

Teiser: By the time that you came here, was your label going out into commercial channels?

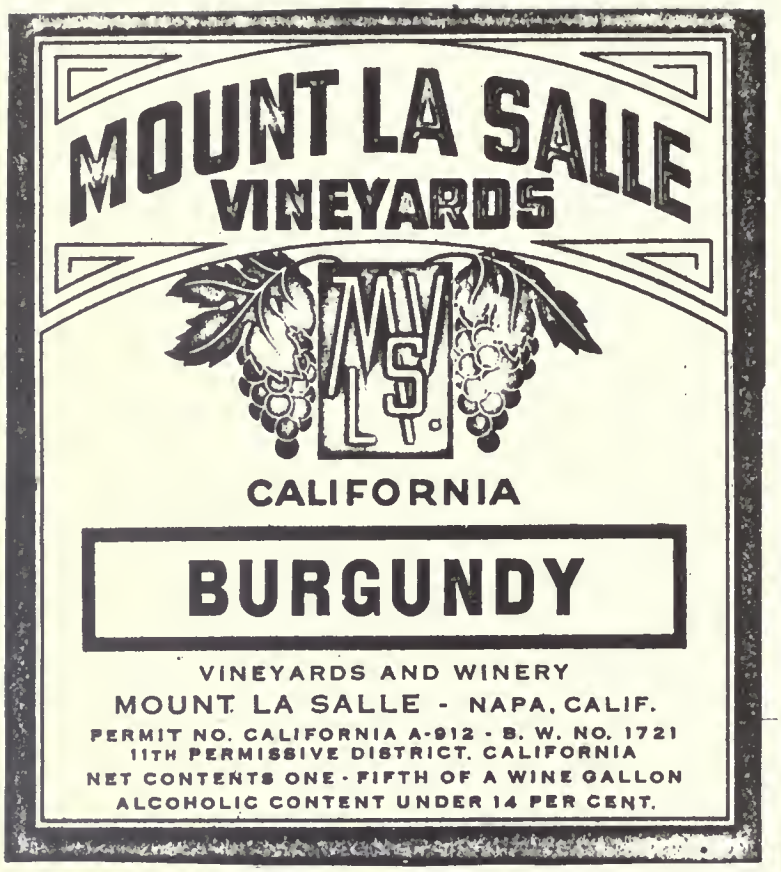
Timothy: Now, that gets to be a little bit of a story in itself. At Martinez the Brothers used a label called La Salle Products. They used that name in the label for some years of Prohibition; I don't know if it was for the entire Prohibition period or just what portion. Now since our founder, St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle, had that name la Salle, you know, it is sort of built into most anything and everything in our order. When we're looking around for a name for something, it's very natural for us to think back to our founder and to use his name, or part of his name, like our Chateau La Salle that we named after the house of the la Salle family in Rheims. It's quite natural for us to do that. So with Christian Brothers establishments throughout the world, you'll find the name La Salle here, there and everywhere.

So our Mont La Salle Vineyards as the corporate name of our wine and brandy operation stems from that same kind of thinking.

De La Salle Institute is the corporation, and it conducts all of our school work or the educational work of the Brothers here on the West Coast. Mont La Salle Vineyards is also a California corporation, incorporated in 1957. Mont La Salle Vineyards is then the incorporated name under which we operate today in the wine and brandy business. So that may explain something further. De La Salle Institute is a tax exempt non-profit corporation--where Mont La Salle Vineyards is involved in the making of wine and in making of brandy and the sale of its products, and involved in making some net profit, we hope. Mont La Salle Vineyards pays income taxes on its income and we have done so since it was organized in 1957.

Teiser: Someone suggested that I ask you how a church organization pays for its grapes when most wineries depend upon banks during crushing seasons.

Timothy: Well, our Mont La Salle Vineyards operates just like any other winery in the way of being a private corporation, you know, and needing to borrow from banks once in a while.



La Salle Products Incorporated

MARTINEZ, CALIFORNIA

Phone 223-J

The Christian Brothers of De La Salle Institute are in sole control of the winery at Martinez, and the wines are made and shipped under their direct supervision.

PRICE LIST

Dry Wines (Tax 4 cents per gal.)

	In 52 gal. bbl.	In 28 gal. bbl.	In 10 gal. bbl.
Chablis	$1.20	$1.30	$1.40
Sautern	1.20	1.30	1.40
Claret	1.10	1.20	1.30
Burgundy	1.20	1.30	1.40

Sweet Wines (Tax 10 cents per gal.)

De La Salle	$2.00	$2.10	$2.20
Muscatel	2.00	2.10	2.20
Angelica	2.00	2.10	2.20
Sherry xx	2.50	2.60	2.70
Port xx	2.50	2.60	2.70
Sweet Sautern	2.00	2.10	2.20

Our Sweet Sautern will keep the same as other sweet wines.

Credit given for Cooperage returned, prepaid, in good condition.

All orders receive prompt attention.

Timothy: Now when we moved to this property, the first label that the Brothers began to use here was called Mont La Salle Vineyards. The "Vineyards" wasn't really tacked onto the name of the wine, say, as a brand name on the wine bottle. It was just "Mont La Salle." When the Brothers first started the place, for about the first year or so, someone spelled the word M-o-u-n-t. And even in the wall of the chapel up here, the cornerstone laid in 1931 has the spelling M-o-u-n-t. But after a year or so of operation here or living here on the property, the Brothers insisted that since we were a French order we should spell that Mont, M-o-n-t, La Salle. So the name was changed then. After just a few years here, we began to print the wine label with the M-o-n-t for the Mont La Salle.

Teiser: You capitalize the "l" in "La"?

Timothy: Yes, we do. I have Xeroxed a copy of an old label showing the spelling "Mount" in the Mont La Salle Vineyard.* It shows alcoholic content under 14 per cent. The wine type indicated is "California Burgundy." We have not regularly been using this "under 14 per cent" as the alcoholic designation in recent years. This is probably one of the labels first used by the Brothers when they began to bottle here.

We continued with the Mont La Salle label right up until we began to get into a relationship with Alfred Fromm, representing what was then called Picker-Linz, an importing house in New York. He came to us because he had seen some of our wine. I think he had bought it in New Jersey. Our wine was being distributed there and he liked the wine very much. He thought that perhaps the Brothers would be interested in developing, let us say, greater sales.

Teiser: So by then you had that wide distribution?

Timothy: Yes, we had some sales under this Mont La Salle label. Actually the New Jersey case was, let's say, without our knowledge and consent. Somebody there was doing something he shouldn't have done. He was buying our wine in barrels. We had not given him permission to use our name, but he began to put our name on his bottles. So this wine that Alfred Fromm found in New Jersey was our wine, but it had our name on it in a kind of unauthorized way.

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*See illustration opposite.

Teiser: I see.

Timothy: So this was kind of an embarrassing circumstance in a way, but it was one of those strange things that happen once in a while.

Teiser: It ended well.

Let me go back to when you first saw this property at Mont La Salle.

Timothy: Well, actually I saw this property for the first time when--I think a little bit prior to moving of the casks from Martinez up here--a group of us Brothers came here on a picnic one day to see it. The first time I saw this property the old stone winery building that still exists right out here was here. Wine casks and tanks were in it, not exactly in the same arrangement we have today, but quite comparable to the arrangement of casks and tanks in that old stone building today.

Teiser: Had Mr. Gier kept his cooperage up through Prohibition?

Timothy: Yes. Quite a bit of the cooperage was in excellent shape.

Now there was another little stone building too. We called it the "little cellar." It still exists but we have built around it so it's kind of concealed among other buildings. There were two stone buildings that existed out here with a span of about thirty feet of space between the two. The wine cellar and then the little cellar. Both were wine cellars. The little cellar may have been completely empty when the Brothers acquired this property. I don't know exactly whether there was something in it or not. Theodore Gier had his distillery in that building at one time.

Teiser: He hadn't been making wine during Prohibition, had he?

Timothy: At least not for the entire period of Prohibition. He may have been allowed to start making wine at the beginning, but at any rate in 1930, before Prohibition had come to an end, he had been stopped from making wine. So it was illegal for him to make any sales of wine. That's why he was hard pressed financially.

Teiser: I see.

Timothy: That's one of the basic reasons. The Depression was another one.

Teiser: You said that there was a still here?

Timothy: Theodore Gier had a little old still, yes. It had once been in that building that I say was called the little cellar. When I came it was in another building. A frame building housed the still when I first saw it in 1935.

BROTHER JOHN AND ALFRED FROMM

Timothy: Now, some time or other in the story we have to bring in Brother John. Perhaps this is as good a point as any. Brother John was the man who was largely responsible for developing the size of our wine and brandy business, and developing our relationships with Fromm & Sichel, the firm then called Picker-Linz. I mentioned Alfred Fromm. When I mention him I'm all the way up to 1937 or 1938, say, in historical dating.

Brother John entered the order early in 1932. He entered right here on this property, so he did not know first-hand the old novitiate property at Martinez. Then, after having gone through his novitiate here and having a certain amount of college training at St. Mary's College, he was moved back up here to work with Brother Raphael in the winery. The same Brother Raphael who had been at Martinez was still here in charge of the winery. He was in charge from about 1911 or so on up until it closed at Martinez, then for the first few years that the winery operated here, right on up until say about the end of 1934. Perhaps his jurisdiction over the winery may have extended to about the end of January of 1935 or something like that.

Brother John was assigned to work with Brother Raphael in the winery, and they worked together, with Brother John as a young man only about twenty-two or twenty-two and a half years old, something like that, and Brother Raphael quite old. Brother Raphael was Swiss in background.* Brother John was, oh, German and Scotch and Irish, I think in his genetic mix. Brother John was a very competent kind of an individual in many ways. He had been born in Portland, Oregon. He had been raised

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*For additional recollections of Brother Raphael, see pp. 35-36.

Timothy: by his father in and around the produce industry. And in the produce industry they have various by-words like this: "Well, if you don't sell it today, you throw it out tomorrow." You know, it becomes rotten. It spoils and you can't sell it tomorrow if you couldn't sell it today. The produce business is apparently a fast-moving kind of a thing, and you have to be on your toes in order to operate properly and to make any money in that business.

So Brother John, being a bright young fellow, picked up a lot of business techniques, a lot of ambition and drive in and around the produce business from his father, perhaps from other relatives and friends. He was a very dynamic and creative kind of man. He had the kind of imagination where he could study a subject or study a problem and look into the future and pretty much understand how it was going to work out. He had foresight, maybe that's the one-word way of saying it. He could juggle a lot of problems and act more or less like a circus juggler, keeping everything going at once, you know. He was great as an organizer, understanding people, being able to size people up, evaluate them and then determine whether or not, let's say, he wanted to hire a certain individual for some specific job. He was very good at foreseeing what such a person might be able to offer to him in the way of creativity in future development and so on. He was a very good judge of men.

Brother John had just loads of talent and loads of drive and loads of energy. However, he did have a heart problem. Doctors after his death told us that he had had a bad heart from the time he was twenty-one years old, that he had had rheumatic fever at the age of twenty-one and that this had damaged his heart. It ended up with him passing away suddenly, April 16, 1962. So he's been gone a little more than nine years now.*

Now that's not a complete story, but kind of a thumbnail sketch of Brother John and his general character, his personality, and some explanation of why he was so successful in developing our relationships with Fromm & Sichel and our entire business.

Teiser: Prior to the development of your relationship with Mr. Fromm, your wine distribution was in both bulk and bottled wine?

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*Brother John was born Stanley S. Hoffman on June 11, 1912.

Timothy: Yes, yes, we had both bulk and bottle sales. I guess our most sizeable sales were probably in the state of Washington. Then probably the next state was California. We probably had more sales of wine in Washington than we did in California before we got acquainted with Fromm & Sichel.

Teiser: Was it a relatively small operation or...

Timothy: Well, yes. Everything is relative to everything else, you know. Certainly in this day and age and looking at the way things are today, you have to say it was a very small operation that we had prior to our getting acquainted with Fromm & Sichel.

Teiser: But it was a commercially feasible one?

Timothy: No, you might say we were still feeling the effects of Prohibition and the after-effects of it or whatever, and then the Depression, which seemed to hang on longer here in California than it did on the East Coast. Of course maybe I'm not a good judge of what happened on the East Coast, but the Depression period seemed to hang on a long time out here in California, depressing the sales of wine in the general market and the price structure of wines and so on, right on up until practically the beginning of World War II. So the Depression was still with us and we were feeling the effects of it at the time that Alfred Fromm first came to see us and we first began to have a working relationship with his company. I think the official name was Picker-Linz Importers, Inc. They were basically a New York import house, and their imports were wines from Germany, where I believe Alfred Fromm's father was still operating a winery at that time and shipping wines over to New York. They also had other wines from other countries of Europe as well, I think, a few distilled spirits, Scotch whisky and one thing and another. Their marketing area was mostly the New York metropolitan area at that time. When they began to distribute our products, they worked from a New York base and developed that New York market. They had to kind of hopscotch across the country to fill in voids in the marketing field, you know. Chicago was one of the places, one of the other major cities in the country. I guess it's second in size, at least I believe it was then, to New York. So Chicago was the next logical step. The Chicago area was then developed. As time went on, they were able to move across the country until today we have distribution of our wines and brandy in all fifty states.*

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*For additional material on Alfred Fromm and the expansion of Christian Brothers' markets, see pp. 38-41, 43 and other references as indexed.

(Interview #2 - August 16, 1971)

EARLY HISTORY OF THE MONT LA SALLE PROPERTY

Teiser: Let me explain: Brother Timothy is looking at an album that is owned by the Brothers and is titled, The Lotus Vineyard, Napa County, California, 1893. It contains early pictures and other papers related to the present Mont La Salle property. You said the property owner was...

Timothy: The original owner as we know it of this Mont La Salle property, that has had a number of different names over the years, was Mr. Hudemann, H-u-d-e-m-a-n-n.

Teiser: H. Hudemann.

Timothy: Yes. He owned this property from 1864 to 1882. And it is said that he first conceived the park and all its natural beauty. This photograph shows plantings on the property near where some home sites are located. Now apparently from this inscription Mr. Hudemann died in San Francisco, July 2, 1892.*

Mr. Hudemann lost this property. Then the property was bought in 1884 by Rudolf Jordan. Rudolf Jordan owned the property for about sixteen years and sold it in March, 1900, to Theodore Gier.

This album was presented to the Christian Brothers in July, 1930, by Mr. Rudolf Jordan, Jr., who had kept it over the years. In the album we find various scenes. Old photographs that show the beauty of the property and show some of the buildings. Most of these old photos were taken while Rudolf Jordan owned the property. This scene showed the original old winery on the

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*See also pp. 30-31.

Timothy: property, but it shows part of a building, the spring, some water flowing down near the old stone winery building. The old original winery was only about maybe twenty by twenty-five feet in size, and a home is built over the top of it, so that that old stone winery is now nothing but a basement under a hillside home.*

Teiser: Who built that?

Timothy: I really don't know. I think it's likely that either Mr. Hudemann or Mr. Jordan built this old stone building.

This is a view looking from the vineyard down over a couple old barns or implement sheds or whatever you want to call them. Here's another view from a little higher up in the vineyard. Another view in the vineyard showing some vines rolling over a smooth rounded hill. Other vineyards and an olive orchard in the distance. This olive orchard area is directly out in front of where our Mont La Salle School now sits and looks down over this hillside. There is no olive orchard on the property now, but there are probably about forty old olive trees--not really in that orchard but in different spots, along the edges of roads and in front of some homes, and at points where the olive trees did not interfere with the cultivation of vineyards.

Here is a picture of what is said to be the lower vineyard looking east through the canyon to Napa. Napa is down through the gap in the hills out that way.

This was a little pond on the property. I think it was an artificial pond and it was about three or four feet deep. When I first saw the property this pond was full of water like you see it here, and there were two old row boats that had been used by the owners or guests. The pond was getting quite overgrown with water lilies and items like that, so it was pretty difficult to do any rowing. There were quite a lot of mosquitoes breeding in the pond, and so it was decided during the course of construction of Mont La Salle School to drain the pond and get rid of that water and get rid of the problem of the mosquitoes breeding there. So the pond doesn't exist any more. In that spot we have a vegetable garden.

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*There are three old stone winery buildings in all on the property. The two larger ones were built in 1903 by Theodore Gier. Brother Timothy.

Montelindo Recuerdo.

Vintage

Napa Redwoods,

Napa,

California.

Timothy: This is another section of the pond. It had a fountain like this.

Teiser: A spouting fountain.

Timothy: Yes, squirting water straight up in the air. Well, gravity pressure, the water coming down from the spring up above where that little old wine cellar used to be. Several of these little old rustic bridges were constructed over parts of the pond. Several little islands existed in the pond and pathways wound around through those islands over these bridges and back again.

Now, here somebody put an inset; I guess Mr. Jordan, Jr. An Egyptian lotus had been planted in the pond. That was the water lily that I said earlier was crowding things. They grew very well in the pond. Rudolf Jordan even bothered to put the Latin name of this Egyptian lotus here in the book--Nulumbium Speciosum.

Teiser: And the inset is a little color picture of that lotus!

Timothy: Yes, yes, that's the flower.

Another view showing the pond down below and looking out from a small planting of vineyard. Here we have the first wine label that was used on the property, called Montelindo Recuerdo Vintage, Napa Redwoods, Napa, California; printed by Louis Roesch Company in San Francisco.

Teiser: Oh, yes, and with that same water lily as a design.

Timothy: Then Rudolf Jordan, Jr., in deciding to present this book, which certainly was one of his prize possessions, to the Christian Brothers, wrote an inscription on one of the back pages of this album. He outlines some of the history of the place, and it reads like this:

"Herman Hudemann, the founder of this place formerly known as 'Spout Farm' and later as 'Lotus Farm,' was a German by birth who was supposed to have made a fortune of $60,000 in Mexican mines. He came to Napa in the early sixties of last century (1800). He bought large tracts of land both east and west of his home place and owned large herds of cattle and sheep. He was a great lover of flowers and laid out this place which, by its natural beauty, lent itself well to landscape gardening. He was a generous host and entertained his friends as would a jovial bachelor. He had bad luck with his stock, much of it being stolen,

Timothy: and gradually lost his lands. Finally, about 1882, a San Francisco bank foreclosed his mortgages and he found himself both penniless and homeless, after residing here for about twenty years. Friends had arranged to call for him, but he left the place during the previous night being, unable--as he is reported to have said--to part with it in full view of all its beauty and its charms. He found employment as a warehouse keeper in San Francisco. In 1892, on July 2, he was found dead in his bed, friends having called to make arrangements for an outdoor celebration of July 4th. He was over seventy years old. His body rests in the old Masonic Cemetery in San Francisco in an unmarked grave. The most fitting monument to his memory remains the Sequoia Gigantea, a very stately tree which he had planted in front of the old dwelling now demolished.

"As a very young man, full of hope and energy, the writer [Rudolf Jordan, Jr.] intended to develop the place as a vineyard, for which worked [sic] he had been trained; but market conditions and lack of capital compelled him to give up the project.

"The natural beauty of the place and its splashing fountains and the abundant wildlife were ever an inspiration, not only for the ceaseless work required, but also for a sustained meditation on the wonders of nature.

"Once upon a time the Egyptian Lotus--Nulumbium Speciosum--flourished in the shallow portions of the pond and added much beauty to the mystery of its still waters. When the writer was informed that this place had been acquired by the Christian Brothers for an educational institution, he felt that it had finally come into proper hands, because the influence of its beauty and its wooded hills cannot help being beneficial in the education of young men. For, its quiet seclusion should further the contemplation on the Infinite Mind in the deep shade of its eternal Redwoods.

"Rudolf Jordan, Jr., July 1930, 333 Kearny Street, San Francisco, California."

Then there is a postscript with the initials "N.B."

Teiser: Note well; "nota bene."

Timothy: "Hudemann is supposed to have imported the German carp, some large ones being in the pond at that time. Fond of digging in the muddy bottom it kept water turbid and also ate the buds of the water

Timothy: lilies. It spread to the river waters of [the] vicinity and turned out to be no welcome acquisition."

So apparently this carp spread to the Napa River, and the people didn't like that.

Now Rudolf Jordan, Jr., wrote a poem and inscribed it in the back of this same album. I suppose I should read this, too. I think it's pretty good. The title is Sempervirens.

Five thousand years of untold history
Are locked in fluted, red-brown bark
Of these cathedral columns, reverently
They raised their fingered tops and mark
The azure sky a temple vast;
Like pyramids, with broadened base
Deep-rooted, gripping earth, they will outlast
The blight of time and rust of place.

For countless years before, in sheltered dells,
Amid upheaving nature's strife,
They stood like brave, unyielding sentinels,
The emblems of eternal life.
Though ruthless axe has laid them low, and flame
Has scarred, they rise in victory
Undaunted, ever honor crowned by name
Of Redwood, matchless, sovereign tree.

A strange elixir courses through its veins,
A blood undoing rot and pest.
In joyous freedom from the galling chains
Of ailment, bittering life's zest.
Without compare its timber, mighty store
For rough support or satin wall
Of panels, strong and gentle evermore,
The gift of ageless suns withal.

Young manhood's craving longings were entwined
With redwood evergreen, deep tide
Of hope engulfed a doubting, restless mind--
Here courage, faith and peace abide,
A vision won--charred stumps bid saplings soar
From pulsing earth, voiced pillars of
A living temple, prompting to adore
The spirit of a brother's love.

Timothy: A wreath of evergreen adorns the spot
Where youthful dreams were laid to rest;
At times fond memory bewails the lot
Of banishment for fortune's quest;
And yet, when bracing hope seems on the wane,
Wherever Redwoods stand and sing,
To hallowed ground the trail leads on again
For true, unfettered worshipping.

R.J.Jr.

This principal paper in the front of this book is a deed from the Odd Fellows Saving Bank to Rudolf Jordan dated May 3, 1884. That would be the date of his purchase of the property.*

WINE MAKING TECHNOLOGY IN THE POST-REPEAL PERIOD

Teiser: Brother Timothy, you were brought here as a chemist, but I suppose you were expected to be a winemaker suddenly, weren't you?

Timothy: Well, Brother John was on the job at that time; this is 1935. Brother John had been on the job for about a year or maybe a little more than a year before I came along in the wine business here. Brother John had attended Dr. [William V.] Cruess' courses that were given at the University of California at Berkeley in the food products classrooms. Dr. Cruess in those years immediately after Repeal was conducting some courses that were part-time courses, even, I believe, afternoon and night classes, so that part-time students could come and learn something about wine business. Perhaps the whole sum of what a winemaker was expected to know in those days was contained within the covers of a little book by Dr. Cruess on the principles and practices of wine making. A little book about five eighths of an inch thick.**

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*For additional material on the history of the property, see pp. 58-66.

**Cruess, William V., The Principles and Practices of Wine Making, New York: Avi Publishing Co., 1934, 212p.

Timothy: Now the industry, having just gone through Prohibition, had lost, you might say, a whole generation of winemakers, since those who had been in the business just before Prohibition pretty much had to go out and find some other work. They might take a job as a carpenter or a blacksmith or an automobile repairman or most anything; I don't know what they did.

When I started in 1935, there was hardly anybody around from whom you could get any reliable information. I'd been teaching high school chemistry and if I would ask somebody the very simplest kind of question about wine chemistry, I would generally find out that they didn't know the answer. They would just look at me and think that, "Well, you're digging too deep." People in the wine business just didn't know all the background of wine technology that they should have known.

Of course, let's say, they were all young, and a lot of winemakers were working by the old rule of thumb. Some of the things were like old superstitions in the industry, things like, you don't rack a wine or you don't bottle a wine on a cloudy day, or a rainy day. You wait for a bright sunny day, a bright clear day before you move that wine from one cask or tank to another.

Perhaps things like that were sort of current in the industry, at least in some of the wineries. Maybe those were in more backward wineries. In trying to rationalize that thing about not moving a wine on a cloudy day or waiting for a bright sunny day, the only kind of a thought that I can come up with that might make some sense is that they found from experience that if they opened a cask or tank on a rainy day, perhaps the wine became a little cloudy. But if they did the same thing on a bright sunny day, perhaps they could bottle the wine without filtration and the wine was clear.

Well, it seems to me that this must have been just simply a matter of atmospheric pressure. On a rainy or cloudy day, atmospheric pressure was low and the man went with the hammer and tapped on the wooden bung on the top of the cask or tank and then pulled that bung out. With the atmospheric pressure being low, the wine would tend to jump in the tank. Perhaps that wine had been put in the tank when it was a bright sunny day and the atmospheric pressure was then high. So any jar or sort of a little jump that the wine might make inside that cask or tank would tend to dislodge sediments that may have adhered to the side walls of the cask or tank, and it would throw these things somewhat into suspension. So, if there is any truth to that old

Timothy: thing of don't rack the wine on a rainy day or cloudy day, it must have something to do with barometric pressure.

Teiser: When you came into the industry, you had to learn then just as other industry members had to learn, didn't you?

Timothy: Yes, yes. And I say all this in spite of the fact that Christian Brothers did have a continuous wine production history from the time we got started at Martinez until the present day. Brother Raphael had been the winemaker through those Prohibition years. He was born in Switzerland, worked around dairies and cheese factories, and so his background of technology was all connected with dairying and cheese before he got into the wine business at Martinez. I knew him for a number of years, about sixteen years I guess before he passed away about 1944.

He was not educated beyond, I guess, about grammar school. He was a very simple and sincere and hard-working kind of a man. One of the by-words that he had about wine was that hard work makes good wine. I believe this had to do with merely the fact that you had to scrub everything, you had to scrub every bucket, every hose. You had to scrub the interior of every cask and tank. You had to scrub the exterior too to make sure that it was clean. This same Brother Raphael, even though he believed in the constant scrubbing of things and very great cleanliness in and about the winery, really didn't understand the microbiology of wine. He didn't understand the living organisms that might be present in the wine. Brother John used to say about him that he would go around and look for a wine that was clear in a wine cask or tank. If it was clear, then he could send that to the bottling department and you could bottle that one. If it was not clear, he would just let time go by until it cleared up by itself. At least hoping that it would clear up.

Now if there was any microorganism present in the wine, the microorganism with the passage of time might just develop and become a worse problem. So, waiting for it to clear up was not always the answer.

When Brother John came into the wine business and studied a few of Dr. Cruess' subjects at Berkeley, it was not very long before Brother John could see that Brother Raphael really didn't understand the chemistry and the bacteriology of wine. So very soon some conflict occurred in the way of differences of opinion.

Timothy: The Brother Provincial, the man in charge of our San Francisco district, the entire West Coast, could see that Brother John knew more about the subject than Brother Raphael. So Brother Raphael was replaced by Brother John right about the end of 1934, about the beginning of '35. Brother John was then in full charge of the winery for maybe about six months or so before I entered the winery to become his assistant, or his wine chemist, or whatever you want to say there.

Teiser: Was pure yeast culture introduced about the time you came in?

Timothy: No. A few years later, maybe five or more years later, we began to consider and talk about and experiment with pure yeast culture. In those first years that I was in the wine business, we depended on the yeast cultures that were present on the skins of the grapes. You had in those years more sporadic fermentations--more unpredictable fermentations. A lot of things were not thoroughly known or well incorporated into the practices of running the winery that should have been known and that are now known. Things like picking the grapes at a proper period of ripening rather than let them get overripe.

It seemed that the old practices were to let the grapes get as ripe as possible. Let them get about as much sugar as you could possibly get. So there were years when we crushed grapes all the way up to twenty-eight or more degrees sugar. This was done upon occasion, and it was generally known then though that that was a little too high. But twenty-four, twenty-five, twenty-six were thought to be all right. Those readings are a bit high too. Very simple things like that were not very well understood in the industry in those days.

Teiser: You yourself must have acquired a great deal of knowledge, because I understand you've been a member of the Wine Institute technical advisory committee, and are one of the state's leading technologists.

Timothy: Well, I've been around the wine industry for thirty-six years now, and after thirty-six years I ought to know the subject pretty well. I did not have the benefit of, let's say, attending the University of California at Davis for their entire courses in viticulture and enology. It would have been better if I had, but I sort of learned the hard way, working under Brother John, learning from him. Also, reading everything that I could get my hands on that was printed by the University of California. Practically all the books that have come out of the University of California I have gotten quite familiar with.

Teiser: They've been learning things all this time too.

Timothy: Yes, yes, sure. The whole subject of science is the matter of settling things and researching things and delving into the unknown to some degree. That's what research is. Trying to find out what is there. If you knew ahead of time, why then you wouldn't need to research the problem. [Laughter] So you're digging into the unknown all the time with research.

Now the University of California deserves great credit for research and standardization of practices, for the recognition of what are the correct practices and what are the incorrect practices and so on; then for the advocating of these things and for the promoting of these better practices among the wineries. The University of California for maybe thirty years has been telling grape growers to plant better grape varieties to make better wines, to plant in the recommended regions rather than to plant in poorer locations. So the University has been very helpful to the industry, both the viticultural industry and the wine making industry, and in the elevating of the wine quality of California. I think in recent years, let's say the last ten years, the recognition of this high quality of California wines has gotten increasingly accepted throughout the trade, and throughout the whole enological world you might say.

People in other countries recognize that the University of California at Davis is one of the leaders in the world for the courses in viticulture and enology that it conducts. Students have come from perhaps twenty different countries over the years to study there, and also at Fresno State College. Students from South Africa, from Australia, from France, from all the wine producing countries of the world that I can think of have come either to visit or to enroll in classes at the University of California at Davis.

Teiser: Do you in your winery employ these younger trained men?

Timothy: Yes, we do. I don't have the number right at my fingertips, but we must have about ten or twelve men, practically all of them younger than I am, who have graduated from the University of California at Davis or from Fresno State in the enology and vicitulture courses.

ALFRED FROMM AND MARKET EXPANSION

Teiser: We were talking I think, when we stopped last Thursday, about your relationship with Alfred Fromm.

Timothy: Yes, that's right. When Alfred Fromm came into our winery for the first time, he represented what was called Picker-Linz Importers, Inc. in New York. I believe the first time he came to Mont La Salle was in 1937. Of course, Brother John was on the job. Brother John was a very aggressive and dynamic kind of person, and a very busy sort of person. He was very glad to see Alfred Fromm. He showed him all around the place with considerable enthusiasm. We drew samples from wine casks and tanks throughout the winery, and poured them for Alfred Fromm who was a very competent wine taster and still is. Of course you know that he's in San Francisco now. The headquarters of Fromm & Sichel is in San Francisco. That's their home office, and Alfred is president of the company.

Alfred Fromm was quite impressed with the samples of wine that he tasted at that time. Then he and Brother John sat down and worked out the beginnings of an agreement, a contract by which we could work. Now I might say at this time that we had not yet printed a label with the name The Christian Brothers as the brand name in large type. We had only used prior to this time the Mont La Salle label. It's almost identical to the label that we use today as the altar wine label. Also that same wine was sold as a commercial wine; I believe the printer just left the word "altar" off the label.

It was at their suggestion that we began the use of the name "The Christian Brothers" as the brand name on the bottle. I believe the first Christian Brothers brand name on the label came into use in 1938. I believe we can find the documentation for that.

We began business with what is now Fromm & Sichel, and sales began throughout the New York area in 1938. We went on for a couple of years selling to Alfred Fromm the table wines and the dessert wines that we were producing. In 1936, a little while before we had met Alfred Fromm, we had begun to make a little sherry here, and we had begun, I believe in 1935, doing some fortifications of wines like port.

In those days we were using a little still that we had here to make a little high-proof to fortify wines, and we were also

Timothy: buying some high-proof in wooden barrels and adding it to the wine in the fortification of wines like port and muscatel and sherry.

So in 1938, '39, we were selling table wines and dessert wines to Alfred Fromm. It was in 1940 that we began to blend and bottle brandy, but very late in the year, and I believe the first sales were made probably in 1941.

Teiser: Did you continue to sell your altar wines direct?

Timothy: Yes. We were selling altar wines even through the Prohibition period, as you know, and medicinal wines too. There was some prescription business going on in alcoholic beverages. In drugstores, without prescription, certain wine tonics and wine and beef tonics and whatnot were sold. I remember as a boy seeing some of these things even displayed in drugstores. I don't know what they use for beef in a wine. There were wine and iron tonics, and so on. I believe there's still one for sale in drugstores today. If you ask for a bottle of an iron tonic, you might get a bottle of wine with some sort of soluble iron present in it. I bought one bottle to try it out about ten years ago, and it tasted terrible. [Laughter] I guess they probably sell that kind of thing on the theory that all medicine tastes terrible and it's no good for your health if it doesn't taste bad. [Laughter] Some people think that about medicine. I hope they don't think that about wine, which is also good for your health.

Teiser: So you reserved from the arrangement with Alfred Fromm your altar wines and...

Timothy: Yes. When we began that first contract with Alfred Fromm, we reserved the sacramental wines and have always handled them separately. We also reserved two states where we had previously developed some business, Washington and Montana. These two states are both what we call liquor controlled states, where the government itself is in the alcoholic beverage business where they don't have wholesalers. The government of those two states then, instead of imposing some large tax on the alcoholic beverages, earns its profits on the alcoholic beverages by acting as a middleman or a distributor. We still operate today by making sales directly to Washington and Montana, without that merchandise being sold through Fromm & Sichel.

Teiser: Did Fromm & Sichel offer you merchandising advice?

Timothy: Well, certainly your question is well taken. We were not doing very well selling our products before Fromm & Sichel came along. I think we would have to admit that. Our sales were localized on the West Coast pretty much. Very minor sales were made elsewhere--say, like the sales that were made in New Jersey that I mentioned in our last tape. We did have some localized sales in various other states. They were not big sales and they were not really enough to make the winery, let's say, very viable.

I mentioned earlier that the Brothers had been praying for Repeal. Well, when Repeal came, the wine business seemed to be a little harder business to make money in than the Brothers had initially expected. I suppose the Brothers in those Prohibition years had just thought that Brother Raphael was capable of handling the winery and that he was capable of putting out any amount of wine that he had on hand, something like that. And it was only after Brother John came into the winery with Brother Raphael that it was discovered that a lot of the wine in the tanks was not really saleable right away. Things had to be done to make it more saleable and more attractive to the buyer.

When Alfred Fromm came along, merchandising was one of our serious weaknesses, one of our serious problems, and he and his organization filled a great need at that time. Certainly the entire marketing field was his specialty and something in which he was a great expert.

Teiser: Did he give you advice which would change your production in any way?

Timothy: Yes, he did give some advice on that sort of thing, but that was a minor phase of the relationship. Alfred Fromm would come upon request, come at any time that we needed help or any time that we wished him to do so. He would come and taste wines with us. These wine tasting sessions were always mutually helpful.

Teiser: Have you had help from Fromm & Sichel with the many attractive folders you put out about your wines and the winery?

Timothy: Well, oh, yes, you might say so. Fromm & Sichel at least supervises all of this type of work, and we have a sort of a censorship privilege over anything that they do in the way of advertising. Particularly paid advertising. Now when you get to publicity or public relations work naturally there are fewer controls that you can exercise.

Walter Landor design
in use from 1961-1967.

The winners of the highest total number of awards for excellence at the California State Fair since 1955

Chill before serving to bring out the elegant aroma of the varietal grape which give this white wine its name.

the Christian Brothers®

"I witness that this wine was PRODUCED & BOTTLED BY THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS, a Teaching Order, NAPA, CALIF."
Brother Timothy, F.S.C.
Cellarmaster

SELECT NAPA VALLEY
JOHANNISBERG RIESLING
ALCOHOL 12% BY VOLUME • 4/5 QT.

The Brother Cellarmaster suggests this remarkably crisp dry white wine with lobster, oysters, clams, shrimp and with fowl, veal and cold dishes.

the
Christian Brothers®
VINTNERS SINCE 1882

SELECT NAPA VALLEY
PINOT CHARDONNAY
An elegant dry white dinner wine of rare Chardonnay grapes
Serve chilled

PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY
THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS • NAPA, CALIFORNIA
Alcohol 12% by volume

(the)
Christian Brothers®
PINOT CHARDONNAY

Here is one of the world's truly great white dinner wines. Made from the rare Chardonnay grape, it has a superbly soft, mellow flavor and an exquisite, subtle bouquet. It is a wine of immense charm and finesse.

Transplanted from France, where it makes the best white burgundies, this noble grape ripens to perfection in the ideal cool but sunny climate of our California hillside vineyards. We age its wine slowly, patiently, first in small oak casks, then again in this bottle.

This is a California wine for a special occasion, to add taste-glamor to lighter meats, fish, chicken, turkey, lobster, omelettes, or creamed chicken. Serve it chilled.

The Christian Brothers are a religious Teaching Order founded in France by Saint Jean Baptiste de la Salle in 1680. To support the educational work of the Order's Western Province, our Brothers have long made fine wines in the centuries-old monastic tradition

Brother Timothy, F.S.C.
Cellarmaster

Highest Award Winners for Excellence of Quality

FROMM AND SICHEL, INC. — SOLE DISTRIBUTORS — SAN FRANCISCO

Muirson Label design in
use from 1967 to present.

Teiser: The advertisements for Christian Brothers wines appear over your name and often with your photograph. How and when did this custom originate?

Timothy: I am inclined to think that such ads were started about 1963 or later. The column ads captioned "Brother Timothy's Napa Valley Notebook" running over my signature have been in use only about three years or so.

Fromm & Sichel, Inc., and also Botsford Ketchum, the ad agency, can give you greater detail on the ad programs. Mr. Walter Niehoff is the account executive at Botsford Ketchum.

Of course, as I believe I have said, we maintain a general control over all language and illustrations used in advertising.

My signature appears on a Walter Landor designed label that we used from 1961 to 1967. And my signature is on the back label designed by Muirson Label and used by us since 1967.

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS BRANDY

Teiser: Who made the intial suggestion for the brandy production?

Timothy: I think you have to say that the initial suggestion came from Fromm & Sichel, came from Alfred Fromm.

Teiser: Do you know how he happened to think of it?

Timothy: We had had what we called the prorate year--1938 was the year of the grape prorate. A great big surplus of grapes had been produced that year and grape prices had dropped down very, very low. You can point where $15 a ton was thought to be a good price for grapes. So grapes were so low that the prorate act was developed in the state or voted on. A kind of a set-aside was enforced.

This set-aside of grape products was mostly done by making those products into brandy and then setting that brandy aside. There were large inventories throughout California of aging brandy, made mostly by other wineries. I don't think we had any brandy in that prorate operation. We were not making commercial brandy at that time.

Timothy: In 1938 these brandies that were set aside in warehouses were put into barrels, just as commercial or beverage brandy is aged. These brandies were getting better than they had been when they were barreled. They were developing with age. It appears that there just wasn't much bottling of brandy going on. There wasn't any well developed market for brandy. Some people were in the brandy business. I guess we can name Fruit Industries with A.R. Morrow brandy, and some others. A. Mattei & Sons, I think it might have been called, was in the brandy business in the Fresno area. Beringer Brothers I believe had a brandy on the market at that time.

But just a small number of people had brandy labels on the market, and these brandies really weren't selling very well. They were practically all straight brandies I believe, and perhaps they tasted a little rough. They were not as smooth and soft as they might have been.

The aging stocks of brandy were in warehouses throughtout the state. The market was there if the brandy was pleasant and palatable and more readily saleable than other brandies already on the market.

On the suggestion of Alfred Fromm we began to produce brandy. Mostly by buying this brandy, and I guess entirely in the first year or few years, by buying and blending these brandies. Then, adding a little bit of specially prepared wine and a little, about one per cent, liquid invert sugar to give it a tiny trace of softness and mellowness to take a little of the rough edges off the brandy. Our brandy, as a rectified brandy, is and always has been 100 per cent brandy except for this tiny addition of a specially prepared wine and an invert sugar syrup.

This addition to the brandy was always less than one and one half per cent of the total. This was done in a rectifying plant and for a long time, many, many years, we paid a rectifying tax that was 30¢ a gallon. That rectifying tax is no longer on the federal books, so we are not paying that tax now.

Teiser: That did not apply to straight or unblended brandies, is that right?

Timothy: The rectifying tax did not apply to those brandies that were bottled straight. People who were bottling those straight brandies saved 30¢ a gallon.

Teiser: Who worked out your taste standards?

Timothy: For the brandy?

Teiser: Yes.

Timothy: Well, this was done in a cooperative way between Alfred Fromm and his organization and Christian Brothers, principally Brother John.

Teiser: You must have tasted and tasted and tasted.

Timothy: Well, no...

Teiser: You knew pretty well what you wanted to achieve in advance?

Timothy: Yes, yes.

Teiser: I see. I remember tasting Christian Brothers brandy early, maybe 1941, and that it was distinctive.

Timothy: Yes. Well, our brandy in those early years was generally considerably heavier than it is today. We are now making our brandy almost as light and neutral as we can. We have been doing this for, oh, about twenty-five years. We have felt that the thing that the public wanted was a lighter and more palatable and easier to take brandy than some of the very heavy old style brandies that were around in the market.

Teiser: I see.

Timothy: Our brandy was quite heavy in the early years and it was only after we were able to develop our own distillation equipment and improve our techniques that we were able to make as light a brandy as we wished to make.

Teiser: Did you start making it here and then go to Mount Tivy?

Timothy: Yes.* Today at Mount Tivy we use not only the continuous distillation equipment for producing our brandy but we also have some pot stills. We are blending a little pot still brandy

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*For additional information on the Mount Tivy facility, see pp. 46-50.

Timothy: in with our continuous still brandy as a matter of achieving character and complexity in the brandy, and without detracting in any way from the lightness that we have wanted all the time.

EXPANDING FACILITIES

Timothy: You know that I started in the wine business here in 1935. Well, it was five years after that before we began to expand our buildings. We had been doing business with Alfred Fromm for a couple of years. Then in 1940 we could see the need for some additional fermenting room space. Our old fermenting room was a very antiquated thing with open top redwood tanks. We built some concrete fermenting tanks, just eleven in number and with a total capacity of only about 55,000 gallons. But that was adequate for our needs at that time, at least so we thought.

We built this fermenting department in the summer of 1940. We added some wine cellar space--let's say, about 208,000 gallons of additional redwood wine tanks--also, in the summer of 1940. We broke ground for the building of our rectifying and bottling unit for the brandy also in 1940. So 1940 was the first year of any major construction after the date that I started at the winery.

Of course, Brother John was in his prime in those years. He was very vigorous and very capable in every way of running the business and developing it. He was the boss and I was sort of his assistant in all the physical end of the business: handling the wines in the wine cellar, fermenting the wine in the fermenting department, supervising the vineyards, all that kind of thing.

In those years I did very little in the office, and even today my time and my job in the office is minor.

In 1941 we built a new "L" shaped building between the fermenting room and the old distillery and fortifying room. It came around two sides of the old "little cellar" which was then completely boxed in. Redwood wine tanks were installed, totaling 167,037 gallons.

In 1944 we made another expansion, and this was the construction of an additional fermenting room space. Both of these fermenting room spaces I can show you here on the property any

Timothy: time we want to walk around and look at them.

In 1944 Mr. C.E. Bailey was working for us. He is now working for us at Mount Tivy Winery at Reedley. He was here on this property at that time. I guess I am the principal designer of the 1940 facility. Then in 1944 Mr. Bailey and I designed an additional fermenting room space. We built closed top concrete fermenters at that time. There are just twelve fermenters that we built at that time, with four sumps for draining wine from those fermenters and with six you might call storage tanks, also closed top concrete tanks, that are along the wall, that we call drying out tanks, where we put the white wine juice for the drying out, for the fermentation of those white wines while they ferment dry. They are right in the fermenting room area where we can watch them closely and we can control the temperature, etc. Those were all built in 1944.

To gain greater capacity and modernize our bottling activities at Mont La Salle, we built a completely new bottling department and case goods warehouse in 1953.

A source of good Napa Valley varietal grapes was secured in 1954 from the Charles Forni family by purchase of established vineyards, totaling about 510 acres, both south and north of St. Helena.

At Mont La Salle we built the present office building and a new boiler room in 1959.

Additional Napa Valley ranch properties were acquired from the Rose White family in 1962, the William Wheeler family in 1964 and from Phil Rosenthal in 1965.

The first winery building on our South St. Helena property was completed under the supervision of Bechtel and Company in 1965.

New cold room, new wine finishing or filtration area and additional stainless steel wine storage tanks were housed in a new building in 1969.

Three hundred fifty-three acres of new Napa Valley land for vineyards was bought from the Louis Wurz family in 1970. The Hoyt ranch of Frances C. Hoyt, adjoining one of the Wurz parcels, added another 141 acres to our total, and an adjacent parcel of about 10 acres was bought from Richard W. Scott in 1971.

Timothy: Nineteen seventy-two was a busy year at our South St. Helena property, as we constructed a new 100,000 square foot bottle aging and shipping warehouse and followed that with a new grape crushing and fermenting area of innovative design. John Hoffman and I worked together on the planning and direction of these two construction projects. Keith and Associates of Santa Rosa designed and supervised both jobs.

In 1972, to assure ourselves of adequate redwood wine storage space, we bought the old Sunny St. Helena Winery, a cellar that we had been renting, from Carlo and Alfred Forni. True to name, this winery is within the city of St. Helena.*

THE ACQUISITION OF THE MOUNT TIVY WINERY

Teiser: When did you acquire the Mount Tivy facility?

Timothy: It was in 1945 that we acquired that property. Now in 1945, of course, being towards the end of World War II, with wine sales being very easy to make during World War II, with the wine business being good all through those wartime years, we were almost in danger of selling ourselves out of inventory with our old facilities. So in 1945, to get both inventory and additional facilities, we acquired the Mount Tivy Winery near Reedley, south of Fresno, from Seagrams.**

Brother John worked out an arrangement whereby we paid for Mount Tivy Winery by paying something like 15¢ per case. As we shipped wine, we would just set aside say 15¢ per case, I think that was the figure. We would set aside a little bit of money to pay the bill, and it was just a matter of how business went as to whether or not we'd be paid off rather rapidly or more slowly. We had an arrangement that was, let's say, relatively painless for the purchase of that property.

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*The information on expansion from 1953 through 1972 was added by Brother Timothy in a memorandum in 1973. See also pp. 79-83.

**For the earlier history of the Mount Tivy Winery, see Lucius Powers, The Fresno Area and the California Wine Industry, a Regional Oral History Office interview completed in 1974.

Teiser: Was Fromm & Sichel involved in that purchase?

Timothy: Yes.

Teiser: I see.

Timothy: This was also the point of time at which the old Picker-Linz importing company went out of business and was reorganized as Fromm & Sichel. So the name Fromm & Sichel, although I've used it incorrectly several times in the tape, really dates only from that time.

I want to say this, that 1945 also marks the date when we got the last of the bond issue paid off that was involved in the construction of Mont La Salle novitiate. The buildings that you see on the property about a hundred yards south of the winery are Mont La Salle novitiate and chapel. What was built as the junior novitiate now operates as St. Mary's residence school. This was all built mainly in 1931 and was built by the Brothers floating a bond issue. This bond issue I think was initially in the amount of about $385,000. It took us many years to get that paid off, and it was with Brother John's good management of the winery that we were able to pay that off. So it keys in approximately with the date of purchase of the Mount Tivy Winery.

Now at Mount Tivy we had an advantageous purchase price on the property. And we paid $1.40 per gallon, if I recall correctly, for all the aged wine that was there in stock. One dollar and forty cents a gallon is higher than the price of dessert wines today. In today's market, with our devalued dollar, they are selling for less than that figure. This will give you some idea of the inflation or the pressure on the supply of wine that had occurred through the wartime years, forcing the market on dessert wine up to a figure of $1.40 per gallon in bulk moved in bond between wineries. Of course, as we bought the winery we didn't have to move it. The wine was there in the tanks, and $1.40 per gallon was the price.

Teiser: There was a distillery in that place?

Timothy: Yes, there was a sizeable distillery as distilleries went in those days. It had been perfected by the Seagrams organization, and they had done a lot of experimental brandy distilling, mainly with the thought that if the war lasted much longer, or if the government enforced further restrictions on the use of

Timothy: grain in the making of whisky (and there were very serious restrictions on the use of grain and any foodstuff in the production of whisky), then a distillery like Seagrams would have been able to distill some grapes and perhaps other fruit products to make a kind of neutral brandy, and then to use that in stretching out their whisky stock. They had this sort of thing in mind. Some whisky marketers did do such blending. There were even things like date brandy that were made by some whisky operations as a rather neutral spirit and then to be blended into their whisky. Any neutral spirit from any source can be blended into a whisky without much noticeable change, because the neutral spirit is quite light and neutral as the word "neutral" indicates. It would be distilled at a rather high proof, and a certain amount of neutral spirits are blended into many of the whiskies on the market.

A thing like vodka that has a current large market and was practically unknown in the days that I'm talking about--say, about 1945--a thing like vodka is just a neutral spirit you might say with practically no flavor from the source material, whether it's grain or potatoes, or something else in the way of a foodstuff that could be converted over and fermented out to make a neutral spirit.

In 1945 and 1946 at Mount Tivy Winery we installed a new cold room and filtration area adjacent to an existing wine cellar. We installed a bottling line and a rectifying room complete with a good number of 6,000 gallon stainless steel blending tanks and some 3,000 gallon stainless steel bottling tanks. Necessary pumps and filters were also installed here.

A new fermenting building just over one million gallons capacity, new Vulcan 72" diameter continuous still of special design, a new boiler room and a new vacuum pan were all installed in 1947.

It was also in 1947 that Mr. Herman L. Archinal was hired by Brother John to take over as general manager of our Mount Tivy Winery. In all the years since then he has been doing an outstanding job for us.

In the 1950's and early 1960's near Mount Tivy a number of ranch properties were bought to be developed into vineyards. Names of some of the previous owners were Iwasaki, Essegian, Nerich, Alta Vista, Celaya, Shaughnessy, and Adams.

Timothy: Building and equipment improvements at Mount Tivy were such as the following:

Fermenting capacity doubled in 1958.
Fermenting capacity further increased with stainless steel tanks in 1965, 1967, 1969, 1970, 1971 and 1973.
Brandy blending capacity increased by installation of some new stainless steel tanks in 1966 and 1973.
Rectifying area and empty bottle warehouse were expanded in 1959.
New finished case goods shipping warehouse and new analytical laboratories were built on site of oldest building originally on the property in 1965.
Bottling lines were added to, speeded up and otherwise up-dated periodically through the years in 1955 and 1973.
Peralta Winery in Fresno was leased on a long-term basis in 1960.
Bisceglia Brothers winery across the street from Peralta was bought in 1964 to get additional wine and brandy capacity and to broaden our area for the purchase of grapes.*

Teiser: You mentioned that you were making lighter brandy. Has there not been a shift in public taste towards lighter spirits, lighter drinks?

Timothy: Yes, oh, yes. This is noticeable and widely recognized in the alcoholic beverage industry. I believe it's true even in products like beer; the beers are lighter and less bitter than they used to be. Very little hops are used in the beer as compared with what was used many years ago.

Now the whiskies are in that same kind of a trend towards lightness. It seems that this trend has been going on for many years. We may have been one of the very first in the distilled spirits industry to recognize that sort of trend and to work towards it.

So that trend explains the popularity of vodka today where at the end of World War II bourbon I guess was the number one

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*The data on the expansion at Mount Tivy and in the Fresno area since 1945 was added by Brother Timothy in a memorandum in 1973.

Timothy: distilled spirit. I don't know if bourbon still holds that rank today. I don't follow the distilled spirit business quite that closely. But I know that bourbon sales have not been growing at the same rate as the sales of such things as vodka, gin and scotch, which are all somewhat lighter than the bourbon. Of course brandy fits in that bracket too. I know that brandy is lighter than bourbon, and brandy sales have been increasing at a faster rate than bourbon. This market trend that you mentioned is a very real and well recognized thing.

Teiser: You're active in the newly created Brandy Advisory Board, are you?

Timothy: Well, yes, we as a company are, not I personally. I have been sitting on so many committees of the Wine Institute and the Wine Advisory Board and my time has been so occupied that when this new Brandy Advisory Board was being set up, I suggested to Brother Frederick in our office upstairs--he's the assistant to Brother Gregory, and Brother Gregory is of course our president*--I suggested to Brother Frederick that it would be good if he would sit in on this Brandy Advisory Board, and then I could stay away from those meetings and concentrate on the other things that I'm already involved in.

GREYSTONE CELLARS

Teiser: The winery here and the whole wine operation has continued to grow has it not?

Timothy: Yes, yes, very much so. In 1950 we acquired the big old stone cellar at the north end of St. Helena that was owned by Cresta Blanca. Cresta Blanca, of course, was a subsidiary of the Schenley operation at that time. We acquired this old stone cellar that was at that time called Cresta Blanca Plant #2; previous to that it had been called Greystone Cellars, and we commonly still refer to that cellar as Greystone. However, we do not have the name Greystone on any signs in front of the building. So any vistor who goes there would not find it by

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*Brother Gregory resigned from the presidency September 28, 1971, after having suffered a stroke. Brother Frederick was elected president on September 30, 1971.

Greystone Cellars, November 25, 1890
Old distillery in foreground.

Timothy: looking for that name.

We called that property the Christian Brothers Wine and Champagne Cellar. We bought it in 1950 and began to develop it. We had construction work of one kind or another to do to improve it. We fixed up a road around the back of it that had been unused for many, many years, I guess all through the years of Prohibition. During some prior ownership various things had been built on this old road, so we had a few things to move and tear down in the way of water cooling towers or water economizers--whatever you want to call them--and a big bottle pasteurizer. We had that to remove, or the foundations of that to remove, before we could make a usable road.

This road had been originally designed and built around the building, and grapes had originally been unloaded at the back and crushed in the attic space up under the roof. The building is a full three-story building with the attic space making the fourth story. It's a pretty tall building. This roadway that goes around the back, of course, has to climb a ramp that runs around one end and then comes down on the other end. Kind of a horseshoe ramp you could call it. We have it in use today.

That old stone building is about four hundred feet long and a little less than a hundred feet wide. I mentioned that it has three stories with an attic space as a fourth story built in the tapering gables of the roof. The wine capacity is close to two million gallons. All the casks to the north end of the first two floors are oak, and then to the south end of the first floor and second floor are redwood wine tanks, mostly around five thousand gallons capacity each. The oak casks are mostly about two thousand gallons capacity each.

We built our champagne department, starting in 1954, in the third floor of that old building where previous owners had had a bottling department. That's where our champagne department is today. Champagne finished goods and champagne empty bottles and so on are handled on that third floor. But further bottle aging of champagne ready to be shipped is done at our South St. Helena winery, that we will get into a little later.*

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*See pp. 79-83.

Timothy: Now to get into the history of this old Greystone Cellars, as it was called originally. It was built in 1888 and completed in 1889 by a Mr. William Bourn. (He has relatives, I believe nephews still alive in this area, one still living in St. Helena.) Before he had it completed he was short of money. I believe it opened as a cooperative, with the growers delivering grapes to it without getting paid for them and being promised that when sales were made they would then be paid. I believe the first operation of the winery and the first crushing, according to old photographs showing grapes coming in, was done in 1889.

Interestingly, we found two different dates marked on the building. Above the massive arched front doorway carved in stone there's the date 1889. Then there was a little brass plate; perhaps that was inscribed when the building was first being started. A brass plate, listing the architect and the stone mason and the general contractor and people like that involved in construction of the building, was mounted on the building and it said 1888. So we had the choice between 1888 and 1889 as to which is the date of construction of the building. We've checked out newspaper clippings to find some of these facts. As I understand it from these old newspaper clippings, the building was started in 1888 and then completed in 1889 in time for crushing to be done in the fall of 1889. We have been told that as many as four hundred Chinese coolies were at work on the building at one time. Some old photographs show the building under construction and are in our possession.

Carl Wehr is in charge of the visitors' program or the tour guide program at St. Helena. Carl has worked for us since about 1955 or 1956. Carl has studied the history of that old building because he's right there on the premises and he gets all the questions about what is what and who is who, and when was this or that.

Mr. William Bourn had bought the property from Charles Krug. He held the property I believe only until 1894. So that would be a period of somewhere near six years. Then the property of about twenty-four acres was divided into two parts. A home site was on the property, and that is now owned by a Mr. [C.A.] Carpy, the grandson of a Mr. Carpy who was a banker in San Francisco and who became the second owner of this old Greystone winery.

Timothy: Mr. Carpy* took over the winery in 1894 and then either right away that same year or within a relatively short time transferred the winery to California Wine Association, commonly called CWA. The same CWA that exists today during the Prohibition years called itself Fruit Industries. This California Wine Association got started I believe in 1894. They retained ownership from that time right on into the Prohibition period.

Teiser: Let me interrupt you a second. Could Miss Harroun take a picture of you? We generally like to take a picture of people while we're interviewing.

Timothy: Sure.

Mr. Carpy transferred ownership to California Wine Association. They held the building and made wine there. Apparently they kept the building in beautiful shape. One of the things that they did that shows up in old photographs is that on a sloping embankment running along out in front of the building, between where we now have a parking lot and where a driveway space close to the building exists, they took a lot of whitewashed rocks and over a spread of maybe two hundred feet long or longer, and probably about twenty to twenty-five feet up and down, they lettered with whitewashed rocks the name "California Wine Association." These rocks were very visible from the roadway out in front, and I believe they planted ivy there between the rocks and trimmed it away from the rocks, et cetera. A part of this big long sign board laid out in white rocks shows in an old photograph that we have.

Bisceglia Brothers bought the property and held it through the first years immediately after Repeal. However, I believe they liquidated. They just couldn't make the place go. Perhaps too many items of cooperage, too many casks and tanks to take care of. It was not the kind of place where you could handle wine cheaply. It's the kind of place set up for quality wine and for wine that sells at something a bit higher in price than, let's say, the lowest in the market. So it may be that for some reason like that they just couldn't make it go, or it may be that their marketing situation was rather inadequate for the size and scale of that building, to be able to afford that big old

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*Charles Carpy who became the first president of the California Wine Association.

Timothy: building and keep it running at a profit.

I believe that they declared bankruptcy*and went broke there with that building just a few years after Repeal. Some people will argue that Prohibition caused the Depression. At any rate the two were concurrent there, and the first days of Repeal were concurrent with, say, the last days of the Depression. Now the Depression as I have said earlier lingered on even as much as right on up to World War II.

The property then fell into the hands of the Bank of America which was at that time trying to help out the wine industry because they had many growers and many wineries that were in financial trouble. In those years the bank was indirectly in the wine business. The bank sponsored what was then called Central California Wineries, Incorporated. This was headquartered in Fresno. Central California Wineries owned and operated a winery at Kingsburg. I think they had four or five different wineries that were under their control. So with the bankruptcy*of Bisceglia Brothers at Greystone, the bank acquired that property. Central California Wineries, Incorporated bought it in 1940 and set up a bottling plant in the third floor where we now have our champagne operation.** They bottled wines under the name Golan and Lango. I think the one is the backward spelling of the other. [Laughter] Apparently their expert winemaker was a Mr. Golan.***

To illustrate the technology of the wine business at that time--this was during World War II--their expert winemakers set up a great big bottle pasteurizing unit out in the back. I mentioned a little while earlier that we either removed that or we removed just the foundations of it when we went to fix our road around the back of the building.

They had a bottle pasteurizer designed to handle the bottles immediately after being filled with wine. And the idea was that they would heat these bottles and then cool them again and then take them back into the winery for labeling. So the wine was pasteurized in the bottle.

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*"Bankruptcy may be too strong a word. Liquidate or liquidation may be substituted." Brother Timothy.

**For additional details of the history of Greystone winery, see Appendix II and Appendix III.

***Louis Golan.

Teiser: Like beer.

Timothy: Yes. Other things had been handled this way. I guess perhaps some milk is bottle-pasteurized or used to be. At any rate, this kind of operation wasn't really the best way to handle wine. All of us in the California wine business know better today, but at that time people did not know better. It cost a lot of money for that big expensive bottle pasteurizer. A great big machine for handling bottles and heating them up and then cooling them off again. The wine gave quite a little trouble in the bottle, I think, in the way of the clouding of the wine. So their marketing was not successful. In a couple of years they had to close down.

There may be another influence here. I don't know just what the timing was of this, but I think the federal government stepped in.* This Central California Wineries, Incorporated, that whole thing, came to an end at that time. It sold Greystone to Schenley or Cresta Blanca, whichever name you want to use; Schenley controlled Cresta Blanca in 1942. That's how Cresta Blanca got it. Then later, in 1950, we bought from Cresta Blanca.

This article, "The Christian Brothers Wine and Champagne Cellars," is by Carl Wehr.** Carl Wehr is in charge of our public relations program in St. Helena, at the old Greystone Cellar. He's in charge of the men that show the visitors through the winery. He has been with us about eighteen years. He's a retired Navy officer. He's a very competent man, and he loves

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*In 1942 the federal government threatened to indict the Bank of America and two affiliated financial organizations, Central California Wineries, Incorporated, the Wine Institute and many California wineries, and also individual officers of all of those organizations, charging combination and conspiracy to control prices. See Burke H. Critchfield, The California Wine Industry During the Depression, a Regional Oral History Office interview completed in 1972.

**Appendix III.

Timothy: the Napa Valley. His wife at one time worked for the St. Helena Star; she researched a lot of the old St. Helena Star records at our request to see what she could find about that old Greystone winery. The St. Helena Star is an unusual small town newspaper in that it has been in the same family, I believe, ever since it was founded. It's over a hundred years old now. It has operated only as a weekly, and I believe that their files are absolutely complete from the first day they started to print. So some of the things I've got come from there, and are annotated pretty well.

(Interview #3 - August 18, 1971)

THEODORE GIER'S ALBUM

Teiser: We've been looking at another album. Would you describe it?

Timothy: This is an album that I received from--I can't remember exactly whether it was the Gier family or whether it was very close friends of the Giers who gave this to me. This is an album containing pictures of many of the things that Theodore Gier owned or was connected with in his time in the wine industry. He was operating on this property from 1900 to 1930. During that time he owned vineyards both at Livermore and St. Helena as well as this property.

One of the first pictures in this album is of the old Greystone cellars looking from the north, showing in the foreground the old distillery building and showing what were called ricks of wood, firewood, ready to go into the old wood burning boiler. It's marked on the back 1890, November 25, St. Helena.

A picture of men posed on a catwalk or scaffolding that went out to a pomace pile. The fermentations at that time were conducted on the third floor of that old stone building. Then a long sort of scaffolding went out to what you would call the pomace pile.

Teiser: Did Gier actually have an interest in that same Greystone winery then through the California Wine Association?

Timothy: Yes, yes. I doubt if he was a founding member, but he was one of the members of the California Wine Association, pre-Prohibition. Perhaps his membership went right on into Prohibition and probably right on up to 1930 at the time we bought this property from him.

Timothy: This album, then, shows various scenes in the gardens and in the vineyards of our Mont La Salle property. This roadway scene is along a little creek between our winery and where our novitiate is located. The little lake that was on the property, with rustic bridges from island to island. An immense redwood tree that looks about the same today as it shows in this picture, with a gnarled old abnormal growth projecting out from it as a heavy branch. Then other sort of saplings or trees growing from that branch. That exists in our picnic grove area now. These are old homes that were on this property at that time, all of which except one still exist. This is the one that is missing.

Vineyard scenes. It had to be somewhere prior to Prohibition that these vines were planted, and this photograph shows that they used a phylloxera resistant rootstock.

Teiser: You think these photographs were taken about 1903, or 1906?

Timothy: Yes. Right around that time. The present winery building is here, and I'm sure that was very new at that time. And this vineyard if I had to define the date a little better, I'd say is 1903, because in a later photo some other little structure shows at the back of the winery that doesn't show in this picture.

Here's a vine that looks like it would be twenty-five or thirty years old; I don't think I can identify the variety from this photo, but it's a very heavy cropping grape.

A vineyard scene during the harvest showing some ladies working on the harvesting crew along with men. Then showing the wagon stacked up with a double row of boxes of grapes. Another vineyard harvest scene; no ladies in this picture.

A carriage of the type that I guess Mr. Gier would use to drive to Napa, shown in the front gate.

The property at that time was called by Mr. Gier Sequoia Vineyard. That name shows on the old stone pillars that made up the ornamental structure at each side of the gate. It looks like this picture would date from 1903. Also the stone pillars look brand new, and even some loose rocks lying around would perhaps indicate that the stone mason had just completed his work and had the left-over rocks just lying there.

Mont La Salle stone wine cellar, with little cellar at left, about 1903.

Mont La Salle stone wine cellar, interior, second floor; Theodore Gier second from right.

Timothy: This would almost have to be 1903. It shows the stone wine cellar and what we called the "little" cellar side-by-side, with about a thirty-foot space between them. It shows everything very fresh and new looking and even the roadway out in front looks entirely new with, let's say, almost no compaction due to heavy traffic.*

This is a Livermore scene. Undoubtedly on the vineyard property that Mr. Gier had there. It shows a frame winery building, quite large, two stories, with some vines showing in the foreground. This is an interior winery scene showing a pretty good-size hand operated wine press, four workmen.** Another press structure over this way to the right, so apparently two different presses were used in this winery operation.

This is on the second floor of this stone building on this property. Here is another view of that same floor showing one of the presses and the other one off to the side, and with Theodore Gier standing in the photo wearing his moustache and very formally dressed in his dark suit, with a necktie and a derby hat.***

Teiser: Were those fermenting tanks?

Timothy: Yes. The open top tanks of this style constructed of redwood staves were fermenting tanks. Now when I started in the winery in 1935, we had tanks just like these. They may have been exactly these identical tanks. We had tanks like these, but in the next adjoining room, not in this area of that second floor but in kind of an annex to the second floor that is cut back into the hill. That structure still exists but we abandoned the use of these open top redwood fermenting tanks in 1940 when we had completed the open top concrete tanks that I mentioned earlier.

I believe this scene showing grapes being unloaded from a wagon would come from Livermore. I don't think it's on this property. This scene showing a man with a half barrel or something like that--it may be a twenty gallon barrel--in his hand standing in an arched cave entrance or in one of these wine tunnels cut back into the hill through what looks like solid rock. I believe this scene might come from Livermore; it might even come from the Cresta Blanca winery there where they have three tunnels more or less like this running back into the hills.

Theodore Gier belonged to the California Wine Association and I'm not certain if Cresta Blanca at that time was a California

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* See photograph on preceding page.
** See photograph on page preceding page 62.
*** See photograph on preceding page.

Timothy: Wine Association property or not. It's still there. It's still called Cresta Blanca. I understand the cellar is empty now of wine, and the Guild Wine Company recently bought out the Cresta Blanca label and they bought all the wine that was in the wine tanks. They did not buy the winery or the vineyards. The property is still owned by the Schenley interests.

Now, this scene I believe was also in the Gier Livermore winery in that two-story frame building that we were talking about a while ago. It shows hand presses of about the same style as the one hand press that we saw in our Mont La Salle picture.

This shows three hand presses here. It shows a man with another press of a different style. It looks like it's constructed with something like a big railroad jack as the pressing mechanism. You see the man with that lever?

Teiser: Yes.

Timothy: It looks like he would move that straight up and down. So it looks like four presses in that picture.

Teiser: This was not the old Cresta Blanca winery?

Timothy: This was a separate winery that would have been owned by Gier. At least I believe this. I'm not absolutely certain of this. I know where the old vineyard existed. Very close to Pleasanton. So although Mr. Gier used the name Livermore on labels as the address, I think this vineyard was near Pleasanton, rather than close to Livermore. It was on the road between the two places. The road is called Vineyard Avenue. I don't know if the road got its name from Theodore Gier's vineyard or from the Ruby Hill vineyard that lays along that same avenue. The Ruby Hill vineyard of course is somewhat closer to Livermore than the property that I'm talking about. I believe that Pleasanton has grown enough that it's either within the city limits or right on the edge of Pleasanton now.

Teiser: I see.

Timothy: Another winery scene that looks like it comes from that frame winery building at Livermore,* showing two wine presses. Well,

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*See p. 59.

Timothy: showing one wine press really, but two press baskets and showing a little hand wine pump off to the side. Hand operated with a wooden handle up here. Some of the people in the industry used to call those "Armstrong" pumps. You had strong arms when you had to pump on one of those hand pumps for a while. [Laughter]

This is a scene that looks to me like it comes from wine tunnels at the Cresta Blanca plant at Livermore, or perhaps some other wine tunnels elsewhere. A man stands in the picture. There is one row of barrels to each side. These are puncheons probably about 150 to 200 gallons apiece. One row to each side of the central alleyway of this wine tunnel and then that row is double stacked, two high.

Here is a fancy carved wine cask. Probably about 600 to 700 gallons capacity. It has some lettering on it but I can't read it. By golly, it has what looks like a date. It looks like a photographer inscribed the date in the photo. It has a S 10-19. I think this means September 10, 1919, is probably the date. Now that would be almost the date that Prohibition took effect.

The cask at the top of this ornamental cask has the name David Woerner very plainly marked. David Woerner was a cooper in San Francisco.* I understand that one of his relatives is still living in San Francisco. We had a little correspondence with the lady, I guess a granddaughter.

This is a wine tunnel again. Probably also at Cresta Blanca at Livermore--that's the way it appears to me--showing the bottle aging of wine in bins on the left of the photo and a little railroad track arrangement that looks like it was portable. A little cart on it with a couple of men that look like they're associated with the cart and one sitting on it. Then a couple of other men on each side that probably were also working on the project of stacking bottles into place. One of these men has a little wooden box full of bottles apparently ready to stack in one of these tiers of bottles for bottle aging of wine. These stacks look like they're about four feet deep from bottom to top, and then this would be a solid shelf or platform running through the middle, and then the stock goes up another tier. So it looks like about two four-foot tiers of bottles running up the whole

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*Cask markings: David Woerner, N.W. Cor., Main & Harrison Sts., S.F.

Rear view of main stone cellar, with addition in foreground. Photograph made some time prior to 1919.

Main stone cellar, interior, second floor, some time prior to 1919.

Timothy: thing. It's kind of a structure like a cabinet with no doors or facing on it. Then to the right of this picture there are some casks. It looks like they range from about ten gallons or fifteen gallons on up to about 150 gallons in size. They're in a couple of racks, or a two-tiered rack.

Here's a picture showing the back of the wine cellar here at Mont La Salle in Theordore Gier's time, taken about 1906 I believe, and showing a rather fancy additional structure. It even has a little chimney projecting up through the roof. This additional structure was put on the back or the uphill side of the old stone wine cellar, probably about or between 1903 and 1906.

I think this picture would quite likely date from 1906. It shows a lot of people rather fancily dressed standing around in the vineyard, looking like they are posing for the picture. Nobody looks like they're working, [laughter] so it's not a harvest scene, but it's intended to look something like a harvest scene. Everybody is in their Sunday clothes. Probably a picnic party or something like that, and the photographer wanted to get a good shot.*

Here's a little book that comes from Theodore Gier's time. I don't know if we can find the date in it. It's a little promotional piece printed by the Stanley Taylor Company of San Francisco. It's kind of a chamber of commerce piece. This would undoubtedly have to be prior to Prohibition. The central fold paper, a very long photo running across two pages, shows the vineyard of Mont La Salle here in Gier's time with the winery appearing over in this corner. It looks like it was retouched to some degree. We have the same shot dated 1906, framed under glass and hanging in our laboratory upstairs. It has a couple of inserts in the corners, of some of the other photos that are in this album.

In this little book promoting just everything about the beauty and the healthfulness and the commerce of the Napa Valley it shows a picture of Greystone, the largest stone wine cellar in the world. At least it was claimed to be in those days.

I might mention while I'm talking about this subject that we have somewhere in our archives a copy of a geography book that was used in the public schools of California in 1919. It shows a picture of the old Greystone winery and it says largest stone wine cellar in the world, and so apparently it was accepted.

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* See photograph on preceding page.

Timothy: Perhaps they meant the largest stone wine cellar in the world all under one roof. I say that because I've heard of wineries in Europe large enough that railroad trains would run right into the winery for loading purposes, and run out the other side.

Then here's an envelope full of old Gier photos. I don't know if we should go through all of them. Now this one showing an elk--the next neighboring ranch to this Mont La Salle property was called Elk Park ranch; most of it is now owned by us. We bought it, expanded our property.

Teiser: Which direction from this property?

Timothy: This is to the north of our original Mont La Salle property. The people who owned this property (the name was Marx) called it Elk Park because they had built a very high fence and put elks inside that fence.

Now Mr. Justus Benkiser, our vineyard foreman, was born in Napa. His mother was a girl who had been brought over from Germany to be the maid or a servant in this Marx family home on the Elk Park property. Then Mr. August Benkiser, Justus Benkiser's father, met her and later married her. Justus Benkiser had taken over the job of vineyard foreman here from his father. His father and he have been the only vineyard foremen on this property since about 1914. So the Benkisers have a very ancient and honorable history in this area.

This is one of the garden plantings showing the formal garden near where they had the principal home on the property. The garden still exists but it's in the area that we don't use very much nowadays. The garden hasn't been taken care of in recent years, the way it was carefully manicured in those old days when the Giers lived on the property. I understand from Mr. August Benkiser, who has passed away, that Theodore Gier at one time employed six gardeners on the property just to take care of the ornamental gardens. This is in addition to the field crew who worked in the vineyards.

Here's a picture in what we called "the picnic grove" and it's not identified on the back, but the redwood trees are existing today, and this large redwood tree with rather abnormal branch growing off to the side is identifiable.

Now this photograph would have been considerably later. Ivy has grown up on the walls of this old stone winery building

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Timothy: until the ivy is now touching the eaves in this photo. I think this photo would date about 1919 or 1920 or some time in the twenties. Grass grows up out in front of the winery. This would look like a Prohibition scene when there was little activity around the winery and the ivy was growing rather untended up the wall.

The entrance gate showing the old wrought iron gates as well as the stone gate posts.

Teiser: "Sequoia Vineyard" on the sign.

Timothy: Yes. "Theo. Gier" was the way he normally wrote his name. He didn't bother to spell out Theodore. And the Roman numerals MCMIII meaning 1903.

A vineyard scene marked on the back "taken from prune orchard." So there was some prune orchard on the property. This prune orchard existed right on up to about the time of World War II, perhaps even a little bit later. The prune orchard was high up on the hill, so this view shows the vineyards looking down from high on the hill.

Looking again at the album, another shot showing the fountain in the lake. This is marked on the back, "Lotus lily pond opposite lake at foot of picnic ground." Well, there were actually two ponds. This was a rather circular smaller pond and they called it lotus lily pond. And then the other they called the lake. The two ran together, but there was a pathway running between the two. This one was a circular little lake with a fountain sprinkling water out in the middle of it, whereas the larger one didn't have a fountain in it.

The stone gate posts again with the wrought iron gates hanging in place. Things look quite a little different today; we moved one of these posts and relocated it to make the road wider, about 1940 or perhaps a little bit earlier. The one shown here to the right, that would be to the south side of the road, was not moved. It stayed in the original position.

In the same album we next come to a large photo mounted on cardboard. It is marked on the back "Merchants Exchange of Oakland, guests of Mr. Gier."* And Mr. Gier shows in a light

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*Theodore Gier was an organizer of the Merchants Exchange and served as its president several years.

Timothy: colored suit. An X is marked under his foot on the photo. He has a kind of soft western style hat under his arm. Some of these men are wearing badges and I think that Mr. [Sophus] Federspiel probably is here in the photo. Now, Federspiel was one of the great old gentlemen of the early days of the wine business of California. I don't think I ever had the pleasure of knowing him but I knew two of his sons.

Here's another photo also mounted on some kind of cardboard. This shows men a little more formally dressed. Now Theodore Gier shows in this photo as a very handsome gentleman, with his moustache and his hair parted about in the middle. He is holding in his hand a soft light colored grey western style hat. Some of the men are wearing derbys. One is wearing a kind of homburg hat.

Another photo mounted on cardboard, and it's inscribed on the back "Path down to lake from house." It shows some girls and a couple of men. Kind of a picnic scene. I guess that was what they would call informal posing in the old days when that photo was taken. [Laughter] It's rather arty.

A page out of the Oakland Inquirer, Monday evening, June 27, 1904, showing Alameda County's exhibit. Under a photo that is in the story it is inscribed "Alameda County World Fair exhibit, Commissioners Gier and Wilby, Creator Webb and Pierce, and a young lady demonstrator in the foreground." [Laughter] They didn't bother to identify the young lady. [Laughter]

Here mounted on cardboard is a photo of some sort of an exhibit with the word "Giersberg" on an attractive sign over a photo taken in the vineyards here at Mont La Salle, Theodore Gier's vineyards at that time. And showing a couple of the wood boxes in which he shipped his wines in those days. They are very attractively inscribed--probably branded on the ends of the boxes--with his name "Theo. Gier, Oakland, California." "Burgundy" is the word on one of these boxes. And in the center of each of these boxes a set of ornamental initials shows "T.G."

Teiser: Why Oakland?

Timothy: Well, Mr. Gier first got started in the wine business, I guess after establishing himself in the grocery trade in Oakland. In one of his old clippings I understand that he ran for mayor of Oakland at one time too. I guess he was defeated.

Timothy: He had a grocery store and a wine shop associated with it. Then later had two outlets in Oakland. I kind of think that perhaps he had a third one in San Francisco too. We have an old wagon on the property, a kind of delivery wagon, that used to have his name on the side of it until someone repainted it. It was used for delivering wine and groceries and that kind of thing around Oakland. It has only three wheels now instead of four. That's the end of that album.

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS CHAMPAGNE

Teiser: I think you mentioned the changes you made at the Greystone cellars to install your champagne equipment. How did you happen to decide to go into champagne making?

Timothy: Well, as you grow in size, you get more and more requests for a complete line. "If you don't have a champagne to sell me I'm going to buy somebody else's." A retail store or a restaurant has to have something to sell. So there's always some pressure from the trade or from your own distribution firm to give them a more complete line. There was some pressure like this on us for a number of years. Well, when we had our hands full and our buildings rather fully occupied, we would defer that kind of decision. Once we had acquired the Greystone cellars in 1950, we had some available floor space, and additional wine cooperage for the aging of wine. When you have that facility, then you're able to do something more. So we finally decided to get into the champagne business to satisfy that sort of market demand.

We made our initial steps in the preparation of our facilities for the champagne in 1950.

Teiser: How did you make the decision about which process to use?

Timothy: We made that decision in conjunction with our Mr. Auguste Pirio, our champagne maker, the man on the job right now. Well, I guess you would have to say that we had made a decision even a little bit earlier. We had in 1954, perhaps early in the year, hired a Mr. Joseph Allegretti as our champagne maker. We had made the decision with him to use the Charmat process as the process that was more efficient, that allowed us better temperature control than was normally the case with bottle-fermented champagne, that would allow us to avoid variable fermentations that might occur in bottle-fermented champagne. One bottle might ferment at a

Timothy: faster rate than another. It might have a little different taste than another. It might have a different sugar level than another when the fermentation was finished.

So this was a matter of doing things more efficiently, in the more modern and more scientific way, in a manner that would allow greater uniformity and reliability of products; a greater clarity of the products too in that Charmat process champagne can readily be filtered, where champagne fermented in the bottle was not filtered. We had a number of understood benefits to be gained by going to Charmat process. I mention the word efficiency. Well, this efficiency would also enable us to have a lower price on Charmat process champagne than if we had gone with bottle-fermented champagne. So we felt that the product would be better as well as less expensive, and we could therefore offer maximum value to our customers. This is before we had learned anything about a transfer star being available anywhere in the industry.

The transfer star operation with bottle-fermented champagne in more recent years has enabled the people who are bottle-fermenting champagne to gain some of the benefits of both the bottle fermented process and the Charmat process. They have a hybrid process, you might say, if they're using a transfer star. This allows them to get the higher price associated with bottle-fermented champagne and still to enjoy some of the scientific and technical benefits of the Charmat process. But we made our decision to go with the Charmat process before there was any transfer star in use in the wine industry in California.

This Mr. Joseph Allegretti, who had started work for us and who was in favor of the Charmat process, had come to us from Italian Swiss Colony at Asti. He had a little knowledge of the Charmat process there and he brought along with him another man, Gus Tedeschi, who had been a co-worker with him at Italian Swiss Colony at Asti, who had more intimate knowledge of the Charmat process. So really the two of these men came to us at the same time.

Now then, however, Mr. Allegretti had a heart condition that we didn't know about. Either he didn't want to talk about it or he didn't want to admit to himself that he had it or whatever, and I believe before he had worked for us for even one full year he passed away very suddenly at his home of a heart attack.

Timothy: We didn't have our champagne operations set up yet. The very day that he died he and I had been in San Francisco and in the East Bay to order up according to our specifications some Charmat process tanks and also a stainless steel champagne filter that we had drawn up to our own specifications. He and I worked together on the engineering or the design of these two units. That was the last thing we did on the day that he died; he and I together had gone to the people in Richmond who manufactured our first eight one thousand gallon Charmat process champagne tanks. Then we had gone from there to San Francisco to order a Hercules stainless steel filter that could handle our champagne and was equipped with a by-pass plate in the center of it or at whatever point we wanted to place it, where we could get two filtration jobs done in one pass through the filter.

Now this was the first time we had heard of anybody in the wine industry in California utilizing a by-pass plate like this, so we thought this was advanced technique, and it did enable us to produce a brilliantly clear champagne and to do it in the one pass through the filters, so that the amount of agitation of the champagne would be at a minimum. We're still using that very same principle today, although we have recently bought a new filter and we are not using that old filter any longer. However, we did use it right up until the past year. It was 1955 when we got started, so that would be approximately sixteen years that we used that Hercules filter, and we have just retired it from service during this past year.

Teiser: Did others in the industry adopt that technique?

Timothy: Well, they were very impressed when they looked through our champagne operations. In the first ten years of the operation of our Charmat process, with our filter, the way we had set it up with the bottle filling machine that we had imported from Germany for the work, all the people in the champagne industry in California who came to view our operations were very impressed with what we were doing. Many of them went home and copied some of our ideas. One or more of our ideas that happened to fit into their programs.

Another thing that may have been a first in the industry at that time: most Charmat process champagne operations up to that time had been using a kind of a brine solution as a chilling material to go through the double jacket of the tank. Whenever any valve would drip and leak a little bit, this brine would cause the corrosion of the valves and iron pipes. A lot of rusting

Timothy: would take place. When we were getting the tanks and our refrigeration equipment installed, we began to think of whether there was some other way of improving the situation. This brine not only caused the pipes to corrode and give some trouble there, but it seemed to be very hard on the insulation too. Good insulation is needed on anything that is chilled like this. At that time block cork was the insulation used and it was cemented in place. But brine would tend to make this insulation material come loose.

The thought came to me that propylene glycol (a sort of permanent anti-freeze that you might put in the radiator of your car in the winter time) in a water solution would be an advantageous thing. I believe we were the first in the Charmat process industry in California and perhaps in the world to begin to utilize propylene glycol solution as a refrigerant fluid. It is in common use in the California wine industry now. It is a better material than brine by far. The first cost is higher, but then it's rather permanent. You don't have to let it leak away or disappear, and it won't evaporate. Once you've invested in the solution, why, you have it for a long time.

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS WINES AND VINEYARDS

Teiser: You have produced some wines here not duplicated by other wineries?

Timothy: Yes. Not very many. Our Chateau La Salle is a wine that we developed and brought to its present state of quality. Very few if any others in the industry have been able to produce a wine like this. It has a lot of flavor. It has good keeping qualities. It's only 12 per cent alcohol but it has a lot of residual grape sugar. When we began to experiment with this wine about sixteen or seventeen years ago or a little more, Brother John told us that we were fooling around with a Tojo bomb. (This was not very long after the Japanese defeat out in the Pacific and Tojo was one of the great old Japanese generals. That's why Brother John used that expression.) He had the thought that we would not be able to make that wine stable and that we would not be able to keep it from exploding bottles. However, with sterile filtration which had come into the picture some time around 1950 or maybe earlier, we were able to filter the yeast cells out of the wine, practically all of

Timothy: them, so that to this day we've never had that much fermentation ever get organized in a bottle of Chateau La Salle that it would cause the bottle to explode.

Now we have always used a metal cap on the Chateau La Salle. We've never used the long dry wine cork in that wine, thinking that the cap with the proper liner inside it was a more nearly hermetic seal than the natural cork. But we do use the natural cork in all of our table wines other than the Chateau La Salle, which we might say is kind of a specialty item. You could call it a light dessert wine or you could call it a sweet table wine. It is on the order of a very sweet haut sauterne, or a very sweet Chateau type sauterne.

We have a Pinot St. George produced of Pinot St. George grapes grown on this property.

Teiser: Are you the only bottlers of that?

Timothy: I believe we were at least until a little while ago. There may be somebody else on the market now, but I can't think who it is. There are not many people that are growing this grape, and of course grown on these volcanic hillsides of our place right here, it produces a very high quality. Perhaps higher than the University of California would rate it if we can judge from the books like Dr. [A.J.] Winkler's General Viticulture.

This book, and also the old Hilgardia about grape quality, do not rate the Pinot St. George as a very high quality grape. They rate it lower let's say than Pinot Noir in quality. However, we feel that it produces a very high quality wine when grown on these hills right here.

I might say in passing that these grapes were planted by Theodore Gier and were here when we moved on to this property. The name that we were told Theodore Gier used for this grape was "Petit Pinot." The name Pinot St. George was not used at that time. We had Dr. [Harold P.] Olmo and others look at the grape and help us to determine that it was Pinot St. George. Since that time we have planted more of it. So we have more extensive plantings on the property than Theodore Gier had. But even to this date we're growing all of our Pinot St. George just on this property and nowhere else.

Teiser: Is your Pineau de la Loire unique?

Timothy: Yes. This wine we put on the market only a little over a year ago. Now it happened that we had a wine on the market already called Chenin blanc. We used the Chenin blanc grape in this wine that we called Pineau de la Loire, but we wanted to make this wine different than our Chenin blanc. We knew we could and we knew it would be a very interesting wine. By a very long cold fermentation and by sterile filtration we were able to produce this wine with a pretty fair level of residual grape sugar, with a lot of fruitiness in flavor, from the Chenin blanc grape.

Since we had Chenin blanc as a wine already on the market and we didn't want to withdraw that, we searched our minds as to what we would call this wine. And since the Chenin blanc grape in some parts of France is called Pineau de la Loire, we thought, well, it's a secondary name of the very same grape, so both will be varietals if we utilized the two grape names of the one grape variety. The two wines will taste enough different that nobody could mistake the one for the other.

I don't know if we're the only ones in the industry with two labels and two names for two different wines produced out of the very same grape. But at least that happens to be the situation with our Pineau de la Loire and our Chenin blanc.

Teiser: Do you have other wines that are quite distinctively yours...

Timothy: Well, I don't think you can find any other wines in our list that are distinctively ours. I can name a couple others that are very high quality and that we're very proud of in the dessert wines. Our Meloso Cream Sherry and our Tinta Cream Port are two items that fit the description. They are outstanding for their quality. We have others. Our Cabernet Sauvignon is very good Our Pinot Noir is extremely good. Our Johannisberg Riesling and our Sauvignon blanc are extremely good.

Well, I guess right there I've named almost all of the ones that I consider, myself, to be near the top of our quality range.

Teiser: Do you rely largely on your own plantings, or do you rely more upon purchased grapes, or how does it fall?

Timothy: Well, it can vary with each different wine. But in the over-all picture, we have to buy more grapes than we grow. Our business has grown to that point that the grapes we grow ourselves on our own property are in the minority of those grapes that we crush.

Timothy: This is more so in the Reedley area, where we buy mostly Thompson Seedless for our brandy. We need a neutral tasting grape with very little, if any, volatile component to go over in the stills and get into the brandy. Thompson Seedless is an ideal neutral tasting grape to utilize in our brandy. It has no seeds, so there's no problem of a grape seed or raisin seed oil. There's no problem whatsoever with Thompson Seedless as a brandy grape.

So brandy, in that it's a large part of our business and in that one ton of grapes makes only a small amount of brandy, the Thompson Seedless grape then is naturally the one of which we have to buy the most tonnage. We don't grow much Thompson Seedless.

With the other grapes that we buy we have to buy more grapes of a given variety than we can grow. Only a few grapes are in the category where we would grow more than we are required to buy.

Teiser: This is another subject: Concurrently, I believe, your labor is unionized completely?

Timothy: Yes. In the vineyards we have been in the union for about three years. All the physical work out in the vineyards is done by union people. Planting vines, picking grapes, driving tractors--all this kind of thing. We have some supervisory personnel, monthly salaried and so on, but pretty much according to the terms of the union contract. They are not allowed to do very much physical work out in that vineyard. It's pretty much a matter of every bit of physical work done in our own vineyards is done by union labor. This union is the Cesar Chavez United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, later changed to United Farm Workers Union.*

We have been union for more than twenty-five years in all of our winery operations, and this again applies to all the people who work on an hourly payroll and do physical work like the moving of the wine from one tank to another, filtering wine and clarifying wine, bottling wine. We have both men and women in the winery and distillery workers' union.

Teiser: Do many of the Brothers work in the winery?

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*Later (1973) changed to United Farm Workers of America.

Timothy: There are only four of us Christian Brothers involved full time in the wine and brandy business, though there are thousands of Brothers throughout the world.

OTHER RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS THAT MAKE WINE

Teiser: Would you tell a little about other religious organizations that are involved in making wine?

Timothy: Yes. I know very little about the several other operations by other religious orders in the wine industry of California. But I think I can say for the record that the Jesuits are engaged in the wine business, mostly in the sacramental wine business, with their headquarters for their wine business being located at Los Gatos, California.* The Assumption Abbey wine operation, with their winery operations being at Guasti, California. I think you probably have that on Philo Biane's tape.**

Teiser: I keep hearing about Brotherhood winery of New York.

Timothy: Oh. In New York there is a company just called Brotherhood, but it has no connection with any religious organization as far as I know. Apparently if two brothers get together and if they want to call a winery "Brotherhood Winery," they can do it.

Now there may be other religious organizations in the wine business in the United States. I have heard of a group at Conesus, New York. It is called O-Neh-Da. I believe it is a church based operation. I don't know if it is the Fathers of the Society of the Divine Word, who use the initials S.V.D., or just which order it is. I've never visited the area. I have visited the Novitiate Winery, and I have visited the winery at Guasti where Assumption Abbey wines are produced.

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*Novitiate winery.

**See Philo Biane, Wine Making in Southern California, an interview by the Regional Oral History Office completed in 1972.

Teiser: Does Fromm & Sichel have an affiliation with the Paul Masson winery?

Timothy: No. Fromm & Sichel officially doesn't have an affiliation with Paul Masson. However there is a kind of relationship there in that Seagram owns stock in Fromm & Sichel, and Seagram also owns Paul Masson completely. But there is supposed to be no direct connection between Fromm & Sichel and Paul Masson.

Teiser: So you don't feel that your winery is in any special relationship with the Paul Masson winery?

Timothy: We and the salesmen who work for Fromm & Sichel selling our products quite often feel that we're in direct competition with Paul Masson. There's no animosity or anything like that, but then by the same token there's really no animosity between us and any other winery operator anywhere in the states.

On that subject I could say that with the Wine Institute as one of these cohesive influences and the Wine Advisory Board as another and the University of California as a third influence in this direction--the wine industry of California has a rather good compatibility between one winery and another. We don't have to my knowledge any animosity or serious feuds in the wine industry of California. Even those competitors that are competing most vigorously in the market place, the winery operators get along very well with each other. Now, perhaps I should say it this way: that if there is any kind of conflict or if there's any kind of a feud--if you want to use a strong word like that--maybe it's in the marketing. Maybe it's among salesmen.

Teiser: I've been told that one of the factors in that harmony in the industry is that you are one of the people who at meetings, when people disagree, are able to bring them together--that this is a special talent of yours.

Timothy: Well, I don't know if I have much of that talent. I guess I have a little of that. But it seems to me that the three factors that I mentioned have this great tendency to bring the technological people of the industry and also the management people of the wine industry together in a kind of a harmonious way. In a way of all working together for the common good. I don't know

Timothy: whether you would rate these three influences that I'm talking about in the order that I gave it or whether you should give the University of California the number one position and then put Wine Institute and Wine Advisory Board in either of the number two or three positions. I don't want to rate it one way or the other like that.

There are many other things that could be said. I know that you have interviewed people at the University of California at Davis. There's a marvelous and endless amount of information that you can get from the University of California at Davis as to all the things that they have done over the years for the improvement of the condition of California grape growers and California wine producers. The technology of wine and the technology of grapes too is a great and complicated science. The art of wine making is the other thing that each individual wine producer has to have somewhere at his command. But both the art and the science of wine have to go together and have to be evaluated each on its own.

Teiser: You yourself have served on many industry committees...

Timothy: I don't think I can name from memory all the different committees that I either am serving on or have served on in Wine Institute and in Wine Advisory Board. But I'm on at least a half dozen committees and more. I might reiterate what I have indicated before: that I believe this is valuable and important work and that both Wine Institute and the Wine Advisory Board are doing things every day that are solidly based and good for the entire wine industry of California. So it's for such reasons that I'm willing to serve on those committees and to spend time at that job and to contribute whatever I can contribute to the work of both Wine Institute and Wine Advisory Board.

Teiser: I think we have covered most of the subjects I had listed to ask you about. Do you have anything further to add?

Timothy: If you will permit me, let me add a couple of items.

Teiser: Fine.

Timothy: As you know, my name is Brother Timothy and my namesake or patron is St. Timothy. He's the one that Paul wrote to, saying "Take a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities." So I like that quotation. It's one of my favorite quotations about wine.

Timothy: A second favorite quotation that I use quite often is the observation of Benjamin Franklin that "wine is a constant proof that God loves us and loves to see us happy."

(Interview #4 - May 16, 1973)

GRACE AND THANKSGIVING PRAYERS

Timothy: Here are a few prayers,* grace before meals and thanksgiving after meals. I have originated all of them myself, and I think it might be interesting to tell you about them.

You know, in any operation like our business, you'll have large gatherings once in a while, and somebody may or may not get up and say a grace or ask a blessing on the food you're going to eat. Now, we happen to be a Catholic organization and a religious organization, and we're in the wine business, and we're doing business with, say, Fromm & Sichel. Their general background is in the Jewish tradition. Now, any time that some one of the Brothers would say the regular traditional Catholic grace, it kind of bothered me that here we're doing this in the presence of, say, Alfred Fromm or some other man of the Jewish faith, rather than the Catholic faith. It just bothered me that our grace wasn't a little bit more ecumenical.

So when Pope John was on the job as the Pope, and the Church was getting more ecumenical in its general spirit, it happened that I was watching a western on TV one time (and I just don't have time to do much of this), but one of the old characters in this western was Walter Brennan. He was the father of this family, and the group got together, you know, in a rough ranch house, and they stood at the table, and he said something like, "Bless this grub, oh Lord, and us that eats it. Amen." [Laughter] That was the whole thing.

So, when I heard that I thought, "Well, by golly, that really does cover the essentials, even though it's in very few words. It covers the essentials of what a grace or a blessing of food ought to be. Well that's pretty good." So, once in a while after that, when I was called upon to say grace, I said it in a very brief form like that, and I called it the "Cowboy

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*Appendix V.

Timothy: Grace," you know. [Laughter] Then I decided to let it evolve in my mind, you know, and after a little while I called it a "Grape Stompers' Grace." [Laughter]

And at one time, for one of our little old parties, why I said something like this and called it the "Grape Stompers' Grace"--"Bless this bread and wine, O Lord and all of us who eat and drink together." That was the whole thing. Then, at other dates, I've delivered a blessing, say, like this: "O great God, creator of a universe so immense that our most brilliant scientists, capable of sending men to the moon and bringing them back home again, are unable to measure its extent. You are the same God who made the microscopic yeast cells that convert grape juice into wine. Benjamin Franklin, while wondering about the mysterious process of fermentation, once said: 'Wine...a constant proof that God loves us and loves to see us happy.' We ask You O God to bless us and the foods and wines we are about to enjoy."

Now, on that same occasion, I delivered a thanksgiving after the meal, and it went something like this: "In Your solicitude for us, O God, You have made it possible for farmers, fishermen and others to bring to our dining table a perennial supply of foods and beverages. The miracle of the loaves and fishes is repeated every day. We thank Thee, O God, for this bounty and ask You to look with love on farmers, fishermen, and all of us." And then, I let it go at that.

Now, each time I do one of these blessings before a meal, I do it kind of ad lib; I never read it off like I'm reading from these papers right now--but I give it a little thought beforehand, and so on. And on another occasion, for a harvest luncheon we had at Ernie's restaurant in San Francisco, October 23, 1969, I gave the blessing before the meal like this: I said, "O, great God of the universe, who created stars, moon, sun, and planets and set them on their immense but precise paths, You are the same God who created the microscopic yeast cells and placed them on the skins of ripening grapes, so that when crushed, the sweet grape juice comes in contact with these living yeast cells and they ferment the grape sugars into grape alcohol, changing what was grape juice into wine. We ask You, O God, to bless us and to bless the fine foods and wines that You have made available to us and which we are about to share with each other. Amen."

All of those are original, all of those have that ecumenical spirit. We're not trying to divide up the one God for a lot of

Timothy: different religious denominations. We're sticking with the thought that there is one God and only one, and all of us who worship God do worship that same God.

THE SOUTH ST. HELENA COMPLEX

Teiser: Would you add something about recent progress at the South St. Helena winery?

Timothy: We have, oh, about half completed the South St. Helena development. We were very busy constructing a lot of new work there last year, and we still haven't really finished up every little tag end of the things that were under construction mainly last year.* We built a large warehouse, 100,000 square feet, had it completed last year. We built a new fermenting area addition--

Teiser: You had not been making wine there before?

Timothy: Well, we had a little crusher out in the back. We had crushed some grapes there, as a convenience mostly to the grower; we could receive the grapes and crush them there, and we were crushing directly into a tank truck and then moving the tank truck over to Mont La Salle here. We were doing something like that for two years prior to 1972, but we didn't actually have fermenting tanks and a fermenting department there.

In '72 we installed a new scale, we built a new fermenting department, we put in a couple of crushers, one of which is a second-hand one, one of which is new. We put in about seventy brand new stainless steel fermenting tanks, we put in two new presses. We're now still installing two new vacuum filters in that complex.

That fermenting area has been rather thoroughly covered in print, in newspapers and a few of the wine industry trade journals, and it's quite an unusual kind of a thing. It's a sort of radial complex, or you could call it a star, or let's say a daisy--a flower with the petals projecting out. It has a pattern that radiates from a central point where the presses are, and it's designed this way so that all the conveyors that carry the solids,

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*See p. 46.

Timothy: the grape pomace or grape pulp, from the fermenting tanks go straight to the presses. We don't have to have a lot of turns or right hand angles in conveyors taking this pomace to the press. It also simplifies the supervision of the fermenting area. The one man in charge can be on a kind of a central platform that we built there, and he can see down each alleyway or each space between the tanks. He can see right down through the fermenting area. All he has to do is turn his head a little bit or rotate his body around, and he can see every man working in the place. He can see the crushers from where he is, and so on. He has an electrical control panel there, where he's pretty much in control of anything and everything that is going on. It's a new concept. We don't know of any fermenting area ever built like this anywhere before. It lends itself well to the supervision of the quality of the wine, or quality control if you like that language better. Half of this fermenting area is connected to a water cooling tower that will maintain fermenting red wine at 72 degrees Fahrenheit, and we want to hold the red wine very close to that point for what we think is optimum development of flavor and quality.

The white wine half of that fermenting area is all connected with mechanical refrigeration and with cooling jackets around the stainless steel tanks. The cooling jackets and the whole wall of the stainless steel white wine fermenters is covered with polyurethane insulation. So for all the white wine tanks we have the capability of maintaining the temperature down below 50 degrees Fahrenheit. We want to have those white wine fermentations quite cold, and then we will retain full flavor and freshness and fruitiness of the white wines this way. We think the optimum temperature is a little below 50, but the optimum for the red wines is around 72.

I have some newspaper clippings that have to do with this South St. Helena complex.*

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*"Phase One At Christian Brothers Nearing Completion," Napa Register, May 4, 1972; "Christian Brothers Build New Fermenting, Crushing Plant," Napa Register, June 22, 1972; "Phase Two Expansion Receives First Grapes," Napa Register, Sept. 13, 1972; and "Phases 1 and 2 of Multi-Million Dollar Expansion Completed at Christian Brothers," St. Helena Star, November 9, 1972.

Teiser: What relationship now does that operation have to this? Are you shifting any functions from here to there?

Timothy: Yes, we are. This property has never had a railroad siding, and it does not have a railroad siding now. So one of the basic considerations when we first decided on that spot was that we had to be on a railroad siding for the shipping of our case goods. Since on this property, Mont La Salle, up in these hills, shipping is the kind of problem that it is, we decided a long time ago that we would be better off to have our bottling department and our case shipping somewhere else.

Well, the bottling department is still here. It's still working upstairs on third floor elevation of this property. But the bottle aging of the wine, after the wine is in the bottle and in the carton--I believe we might be the very first in the industry to have come up with the thought of putting the wine in the bottles and putting those bottles in the carton ready to ship, but then putting those cartons on pallets and using a fork lift truck to stack them in a warehouse and do the bottle aging of the wine in such a warehouse situation, with the wine all being enclosed in the shipping carton already. I don't think anybody else did this before we started it at Mont La Salle in 1952 or earlier.

The old bottle aging used to be in terms of what they call "binning." The bottles would individually be placed in bins, and then those bottles would be removed from those bins after the wine had been bottle aged.* The bottles might need to be polished up a little bit to get the dust off them, and then labels would be applied at that time, and then they would be put in the shipping carton to be shipped.

Teiser: Is there a technological advance implied here? Did they used to have to inspect the bottles?

Timothy: Well, I think you're right there, yes. It does signify a little technological improvement in that, in the old bottle aging bins, they used to be worried about the wine clouding up a little bit or throwing some deposit, and if it threw much deposit or if it developed much clouding, then they might pull the corks and dump that wine out of the bottles and refilter and rebottle, go through the process again.

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*As in the photograph described on pp. 61-62.

Teiser: Or leakage?

Timothy: Leaky corks too would have been a problem, yes. They could segregate the bottles that had leaky corks and put new corks in them, or if they had lost much wine by the leakage, they might top them off a little bit and then recork and put them out on the market.

We began to bottle age this way in the cartons on wooden pallets, with an average of about fifty cartons per pallet, here on this property about nineteen or more years ago.

Teiser: Do you seal the cartons?

Timothy: Yes, all sealed. So then in the way of the technology of things, this indicates that nineteen years ago we had a level of confidence in our product and the way we had handled things that we were, let's say, as certain as we felt we needed to be that there would be no problem with any of these wines and any of these bottles. That we didn't have to candle the bottles or anything like that or check for leaky corks to know that those wines were ready to go to the market.

So when we first built our bottle aging warehouse here on this property about nineteen years ago, people from some of the other wineries came to look and see what we were doing, and then since that time some of them have built bottle aging warehouses just on the style of what we started here.

Now, we were talking about the change between this place and going to South St. Helena: we planned to shut down our bottling here and to bottle at South St. Helena whenever we get around to it, whenever the time is right in our budgeting schedule to do this without too many aches and pains. So our master plan for our South St. Helena location does call for the bottling to be there and to close off here. Now just last year we closed down all crushing here, and we closed down all crushing at our old Greystone cellars; that fermenting area at the north end of the old Greystone cellars will not crush grapes any more in the foreseeable future.

This fermenting room on this property, since it already exists and it doesn't cost us much to keep it in existence, we plan to hold it like a spare tire just in case we need it--in case we have some kind of a serious breakdown or some kind of an incapacity of our South St. Helena fermenting area. We could

Timothy: come back and crush grapes here again, as we have done for years. But we don't want to haul grapes up this hill; this last four miles is a pretty mean little mountain road for many trucks loaded with grapes. We've been doing it for years, and we still bring bottling supplies like empty bottles, and we still bring bulk wine in stainless steel tanks up this hill from our other winery locations to keep our bottling room going here. We're still doing those things. But as of the fall of 1972, we have closed down our crushing on this property until we need that spare tire. So changes are contemplated on this place, as we get our South St. Helena complex more and more completed.

When we've reached the final stages of completion of our South St. Helena complex, then this place will not be very active any more; it'll be kind of a sleepy wine aging cellar. Our old Greystone cellar, right now, is just about that, except that on the third floor we are still preparing, or giving the secondary fermentation to champagne. So we're producing champagne from still wines on the third floor of the old Greystone cellar. And then that champagne, once it is bottled and in the carton, is moved down to our South St. Helena location now for bottle aging there.

So the two bottling departments have not been closed down and moved yet, but whenever we reach the final stages of development at South St. Helena, both will be moved there.

Teiser: Will all the champagne production also be moved to South St. Helena?

Timothy: Yes. Both Greystone and this Mont La Salle property will be just sleepy wine aging cellars when we get to that point in time.

Teiser: And you're now trucking your grapes from here down there?

Timothy: Yes.

WINERY SIZE AND WINE QUALITY

Teiser: As you showed us, before we started today, how you had developed the lower floor of this building into offices, you said that your operations were expanding fast. There's a tradition that expansion, large wine making, is incompatible with fine wine making. Let me turn the tape just before--

Timothy: You asked the question about whether it's more difficult for a large winery to make good wine and maintain its quality than for a small winery.

Well, there are things to be said on both sides of the question. Of course, the small winemaker may think that in a large winery the wine may not get individual attention, as he might be able to give such a wine, and maybe there's truth to that--that the larger winery with more labels and more different kinds of wine and bigger operations and more distractions does have, let's say, a greater number of things to be concerned with. And if it were inclined to be sleepy or lazy or to get into a rut or to oversimplify its wine making technique to where it couldn't give individual attention to individual wine--it is possible that a large winery could just produce a lot of ordinary wine.

However, another way of rationalizing it a bit, too, is that the large winery is quite likely better financed and better able to hire competent people to do its work and to finance and have available the proper equipment that it needs to do the job on the wine. So that there are some things that a large winery can do that a small winery might find beyond its finances or beyond its general capability. I know small wineries where the winemaker isn't very competent, and where it's totally impossible for the people running it to be able to afford any competent wine chemist or wine technician, so that they stumble along without proper personnel on the job. So that's a way of looking at it.

Now, there's also a lot to be said for the fact that the winemaker is an artist, he's a creative person, he's working with wines and each blend that he makes represents his degree of skill or artistry. Well, this is where a competent man is needed in the winery, whether large or small. If that competent man is on the job, and he is concerned with the blending of the wine and so on, he works with greater resources at his command

Timothy: if he has a position with a larger winery than he does with a small winery, where he may have only a very small number of wines of the correct type that he may use in his blend. So he's like an artist working with a pallette with a smaller number of colors on it to do the job if he's in a small winery. We have had occasions where we're making, say, a cabernet sauvignon blend, where we can provide from our cellars more than fifty different cabernet sauvignon wines all as potential material to go into that blend. These are, you know, different lots from different casks, of different aging periods too, since we do not vintage date.

And on the subject of vintage dating--it has been by choice that we have never gone into that. In not having the requirement of vintage dating, vintage labeling of the bottle, we are more free to exercise that artistry of the wine taster than if we were hampered by the vintage dating.

So the fact that we may blend between one year and another year in our bottle does a lot of things for us in the way of giving us greater uniformity from bottle to bottle and from purchase to purchase, when you're talking about the retail consumer. A greater uniformity, greater reliability, greater dependability are there. We also are able by this blending technique to create greater complexity in the wine, so that all of our wines, I believe, have depth and complexity that they would probably not have if they were simply varietal wines, rather than being blended as they are.

So there are a lot of things to be said on both sides of that question of whether you're a small winery or a big winery.

Now, let's say there may be such a thing as a winery being too big. If there is it would be when a winery would get to that point where individual attention can't be provided to the individual wine, but that things are moving so fast and the staff of personnel competent to do things right is so weak and small in relation to the gallonage of wine moved through the winery that they're all doing their job in a kind of a perfunctory way, not paying any attention or much attention to, let's say, the quality level of the different things they're putting out. This is conceivable to me. I've heard of how some of the very large operations in France operate, the very large <u>vin ordinaire</u> operations that sell the wine very, very cheap. At a low price their revenue per unit is so small that they just can't afford to have the right kind of personnel on their payroll to do the

Timothy: right thing with each different wine, so none of their wines have any individuality whatsoever. They're just handled in an extremely bulk manner, without even, let's say, individual tasting. They just bring the wine in and assume that it is what it is said to be and throw it all together and hope for the best.

So it's possible for a winery to be too big or to be inattentive to detail.

Teiser: There have been cases in the past in which financial pressures have caused wineries to overextend themselves, shall we say, and lower the quality of their wine on the strength of a label that's established in the market.

Timothy: Oh yes, well that kind of thing could happen any time. There's some old business philosophy to the effect that it's always possible for somebody to come out with something cheaper than what is now on the market, you know. But it doesn't mean that it's a good thing for you to be interested in that or to buy it. That brings you to the other buying philosophy of "let the buyer beware."

Teiser: I think during the Depression perhaps, or during the period when there were interests that bought into the wine industry which were not aware of the qualities of wine, some people were more interested in merchandising than quality.

Timothy: Well, to me I'd have to consider it very unlikely that any deterioration of quality would occur in any of the wineries of the state. I'm speaking really of the whole state. For various reasons--the competitive picture is such that any winery that would let its quality slip would be so noticeably out of step with the rest of the industry that it would start going downhill very fast and would not last very long in this competitive industry. I know for a fact that, oh, about 1935, when I first started in the wine business, I believe there were 751 wineries registered or licensed in the state of California, bonded wineries. Today there's a little less than 300, I think. So the number is less than half what it was then. So that would be, what, thirty-eight years? Now, some of those wineries that went out of business were very large, and a whole lot of them were very small. The reasons for going out of business would be either poor quality wine, bad management, improper handling of finances, and even reasons that indicate success in business--like the winery was a very successful operation, but that it was

Timothy: then bought out by somebody larger and then maybe closed down because the larger unit didn't need it any more. Let's say they bought it perhaps to acquire a label and a place in the market, and so on, and just didn't need the old physical premises any more, so it could be closed down even though there was nothing wrong with the operation of the winery in the past.

Now, I don't think we want to get into the names of wineries and to specify which went out of business for which reasons. This would all be guesswork on my part anyway.

Teiser: But it's good to have your view of it over those years.

One thing I forgot to ask about the South St. Helena winery--will your administrative offices be moved there also?

Timothy: Yes, we have that in the master plan too.

Teiser: You said it was a variable plan, depending upon your finances, but do you expect it to be finished in the next few years?

Timothy: Well, I think I mentioned elsewhere maybe four or five years or so, but even that is to be taken with a little grain of salt. It may take us six or seven years. Or if business keeps growing fast, we might have to move a little sooner.

GRAPE AND WINE PRICES SINCE 1961

Teiser: Don't you find it increasingly difficult to get grapes on the open market now?

Timothy: Yes, sure it's difficult, but grapes, the right kinds of grapes and the right number of tons of the good varieties and all that, have always been a bit difficult to buy; even when prices were lower some of these things were not easy to find. So for quite a number of years now there have been wines in short supply, there have been wines under allocation, where we notify our distributing firm at the beginning of each year how many cases we're going to have of each different type of wine during that period of time.

Timothy: So this is a regular thing with us. Now, the worst of this shortage of good varieties dates back from about 1961. We had a very severe frost in 1961. I believe Napa Valley only had about 25 per cent of a normal crop. Then '61 in my mind marks the beginning of this heavy escalation of prices upward, due to that short crop. Now it happens also that the old federal marketing order that was a kind of a set-aside program or whatever, and had been sponsored by Sox Setrakian,* was in effect in '61 and '62. And that federal marketing order was designed to solve the problem of surplus grapes, which were thought to be mostly Thompsons at that time.

You know, there were surplus raisins and surplus grapes. And various people in the industry, but especially Sox Setrakian, thought that these surplus grapes were going to break the market, so that the federal marketing order had to be, or was desirable. Well, the federal marketing order required people, by law, to set aside, and not put on the market for any beverage purposes, a certain percentage of the tonnage (it was about 25 or 26 per cent) of grapes crushed.

Those set-aside wines, then, were mostly distilled and then kept as set-aside brandy. Most of it was high proof brandy. Being produced as high proof brandy, it would take up the minimum amount of storage space. The other type of thing that could have been utilized at that time, but which did not get into any significant tonnage as I recollect, would have been grape concentrate. You can concentrate grape juice and that would have occupied a relatively smaller space in tank storage, and perhaps it could have been feasible to do that. But the easiest thing, and the way to do it to take up the least amount of storage space, was to make high proof brandy.

Anyway, about the end of that federal marketing order, that brandy was all sold to this big Publicker Industries, some kind of an alcohol or distilled spirits corporation--I really don't know anything much about the Publicker Industries. But they bought that high proof brandy from the California industry at, let's say, give-away prices, with the stipulation that that high proof brandy could not be used for beverage purposes. I don't know whoever policed it after they got it. I don't know anything about the disposition of it, whether it was ever used for beverage

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*Arpaxat Setrakian, nicknamed "Sox."

Timothy: purposes or whether it was sold in foreign markets and not sold for beverage purposes in the United States, or whether it was used in the manufacturing of industrial products rather than being used in beverage products. However, there was a stipulation that Publicker Industries, in buying this high proof brandy at those low prices, was not entitled to use it in any beverage in the United States.

Now, the reason I got diverted off on that subject is that that federal set-aside program and that short crop of '61 tied in together to create a very severe shortage throughout the whole industry. Both of those things had the same influence, then, in causing winery people and growers to run out and plant vineyards just as fast as they could plant them--because the winery, to maintain its position in the market, to maintain sufficient gallonage of wine in the winery to age that wine and to have wine available at a later date after an aging program, every winery had to be worried a bit with a federal set-aside program like that. Nobody knew when the federal marketing order would be dropped; we didn't know how long it would last.

We had to anticipate that maybe next year we had to be crushing 25 per cent more grapes than we actually needed for our wine so that we'd have 25 per cent to put into this set-aside program. It was mandatory by law. So this forced you to run out and plant more vineyard or to do something to assure yourself of those added supplies of grapes. So both of those things then tended to cause grape and wine prices too to start to escalate upward.

The set-aside program was then killed after the grape season of '62, and so we didn't have it in '63 and thereafter. However, '64 turned out to be another frost crop year up here in the north. The severity of the short crop of '64 was not as great as the severity of the short crop of '61, and the set-aside program wasn't in existence any more, so it wasn't as bad a situation. But the '64 short crop did push our varietal grape prices up here in the north up higher again. And I think if you review grape prices from '61 on to the present time, you'll find an absolutely constant upswing of grape prices all the time from '61 to the present. We've had no leveling off and no dropping of grape prices in all those intervening years. There might be a few exceptions to that. There may have been a few ups and downs, say, in the Thompson market. But in these North Coast grapes that I'm concerned with up here, I think it is absolutely true that there has been no slacking off of that upswing of grape prices since '61.

Timothy: Now, then the next very severe short crop year was 1970, then '71 was a reasonably normal crop, then '72 we had another bad short crop all over the state, up and down all of California. I think '72 was the shortest crop in about the last forty years. So these things all point to the fact that grape prices have had motivation behind the power of the shortage to push those grape prices up. Shortages in the market, too, not being able to fill all the bottles of wine that the buying market might want, have been with us right along since that time.

So, to get back to where I started on this whole little discourse--that 1961 in my mind was the key year that triggered this whole thing off, both shortages of inventory and shortage of supply, and the grape demand on the part of the consumers greater than the supply. This whole thing fitted together about like that.

Teiser: At the same time, of course, land prices have gone up, so to acquire new vineyards is more expensive.

Timothy: Yes, well land prices would go up, I guess, the way the dollar devaluates or whatever; that's just general inflation.

Teiser: But vineyard lands specifically?

Timothy: Well, other farm lands have gone up too, other than vineyard land, but in the agricultural scene grapes have been the number one crop in the way of interesting the farmer and interesting the speculator and interesting the financial backers of agriculture--grapes have been the glamor boy, or whatever, of the agricultural scene for quite a few years now. I think that would date right back to 1961 too. At least the big impetus for that sort of thing to develop would come back to about that date.

Teiser: In your acquisitions of vineyard land, have you thought of going into other areas, as Paul Masson has done, or even going into the Central Valley with new grape varieties?

Timothy: Oh yes, we've thought of those things, but in general, we've made up our minds to fight hard for our position in the Napa Valley and to stay in the Napa Valley with all of our vineyard production for our dry wines just as long as we possibly can. We have not invested any of our money in any lands outside of the area of our winery locations. We did put some money into vineyard developments around the Mount Tivy area close to Reedley and rather close to Dinuba too. Dinuba is not awful far away

Timothy: from Reedley; let's say about fourteen miles. So in that area near our winery locations we have planted grapes, mostly for the dessert wines. But here in the north, we're in the Napa area, in all the climatic regions of the Napa Valley. I think I may have told you that before. But here in Northern California, we have no vineyard land other than in Napa County.

Teiser: Have you made any grower contracts as some of the others have?

Timothy: Yes, sure. Yes, we grow grapes; we also buy grapes. And we buy grapes on annual contracts, which are the old traditional thing, from growers who are located in good areas and have good varieties. We buy also on long-term contracts, rather than just annual contracts. So, we're doing just about everything in the way of grape contracting that any other winery might do. However, maybe different in degree rather than in type.

CORKS AND CAPS

Teiser: May I ask you about a matter that really hasn't been discussed in this interview series, the question of the cork versus the screw cap?

Timothy: Well, the cork is the natural thing and the old traditional thing. The cork is used in these table wines that we do wish to lay away for further bottle aging after they are bottled. The cork is perhaps the closure that lends itself best to helping the wine improve with bottle aging. Now, the cork is the bark of an oak tree. We use oak casks and oak tanks in the winery, and oak flavor in the wine is thought to be desirable in most table wines. Well, let's say in practically all wines, a little oak cask or oak barrel flavor is thought to be a desirable adjunct to the flavor components of the wine. So a little bit of cork taste in the wine may be all right; maybe it enhances the wine.

Now, the modern caps that are on the market, like the crown cap or the twist-off aluminum cap (and there are many other types of caps on the market, and there are plastic champagne corks and things like that) these things are good seals, and some of them are hermetically tighter than a cork. The crown cap is certainly a tighter seal against leakage of gases than a cork is. Most screw caps would quite likely be tighter than the cork. And when we have wines like this table wine, we don't want the air

Timothy: in any large quantities to get into that table wine. The small amount of air that might get through a cork is probably just the right amount to enhance the development of that wine in the bottle. So, let's say, we're not against a tiny bit of air getting through that cork.

But a cap like a crown cap or a good screw cap would quite likely be tighter and let perhaps no air whatsoever get past that closure into the bottle.

Teiser: Is there an ideal head space for the bottle aging of wine?

Timothy: Well, that's kind of a tough question to answer. Some people believe in filling the bottle just as tight as they can get it, you know, with as little head space as possible. And whatever your head space is, you'd better have it uniform. You don't want to have one bottle with a lot of head space and another bottle with very little head space. Now, all the bottles are built to have a certain exact fill point, you know, so that they have the correct cubic contents. Your government taxes are paid on those cubic contents of that bottle, and your consumer pays for the cubic contents of the bottle and is entitled to get what he pays for. So you don't want to have short fill.

If you have overfill, then the federal government claims that you're giving away some wine without paying tax on it. [Laughter] So, you'd just better be correct in what you're doing. You're either cheating the customer or you're cheating the federal government if you have a variable fill.

Teiser: When you age wine in the bottle, it's against the cork, but there's air space then in the side. That gives you more air surface.

Timothy: You're talking about the bottle lying down or standing upside down?

Teiser: Well, either will give you more area.

Timothy: You're right. The neck is the smallest part of the bottle, and so if your bottle stands upright and your head space is up in here, there would be the smallest surface contact between the air and the wine. If the bottle is lying on its side, the surfact contact will be a little greater, but the volume of air will be the same. And if the bottle is upside down (we pack all our table wine bottles in the cartons upside down with the cork

Timothy: down, so then the air is in the bottom) the surface contact between air and wine will be greater. But that volume is the same.

So it's nothing to be concerned about really. It's such a minor difference that it's hardly worth talking about.

Harroun: Is there a difference in champagne corks?

Timothy: Champagne corks are put together in pieces, so that there are no pores of the cork tissue that run through from bottom to top. Champagne corks are put together in layers and pieces and wedges so that all those pores can go through just the one little piece of cork, but not through the whole cork, so that the CO_2 pressure, the natural gas pressure, in the champagne does not leak out very readily. So a champagne cork is a tighter seal than the regular dry wine cork. It has to be to hold the gas pressure in the bottle.

Teiser: Are corks coated?

Timothy: There's a little bit of paraffin normally, around the champagne cork in a little band. It helps to improve the seal, and it helps to improve the job of having a machine jam that cork in the bottle too. It is a little bit of wax lubricant, you might call it. I did mention natural wax in the cork earlier. However, you raised this question of coating. We do a certain amount of wax coating of corks by tumbling the corks in a big drum with some chunks of paraffin in the drum. It's like an empty, dry washing machine, you might call it. And the chunks of paraffin in there with the corks rub against all the corks and the corks rub against each other, and some solid paraffin is wiped off on the corks so they get a very minor film of paraffin. And we do this paraffin treatment of corks ourselves right here on our own property, rather than trust anybody else to do it for us.

Some of the cork sales houses will sell wineries corks that are already paraffin treated. But we don't buy those because we have found that their paraffin treatment may be very variable. One lot of corks will have too much, and another lot of corks won't have enough, and so on. And so we do it ourselves.

CORKSCREWS

Teiser: May we ask you to tell about your corkscrew collection?

Timothy: The corkscrew collection is something I got personally interested in, oh, about 1949. I collected about four corkscrews, very old, beatup looking things from a little antique shop in Yountville. Now the type of thing, though, that caused me to get started in the collecting of corkscrews was that we had had quite a little bit of trouble pulling corks and ripping holes in corks with poor corkscrews. Customers were beginning to write in telling us that they had ripped a hole in a cork, and then accusing us of using cheap corks, where we have almost always used the best we could get our hands on. So it wasn't the fault of the cork, but it was more generally the fault of the corkscrew. There's lots and lots of bad corkscrews made and still being manufactured even today, when you think that people would get wise some time to the first principles on which a good corkscrew should be constructed. You'd think that the manufacturers would get wise and that they would begin to make a corkscrew that would work, rather than continue to make a lot of old, junky stuff that is no good at all, but still made and still sold on the market.

So that kind of thing frustrated me, and I was, let's say, mad at bad corkscrews, and I was sort of determined to find out what kind of corkscrews were available that were manufactured on good engineering principles or good mechanical principles that would work properly when you tried to use them. And then it was about that time, actually 1946, the Wine Institute had conducted an engineering study on corkscrews.* And I had gotten a copy of it, and I had studied it carefully. And of course I had learned that a good corkscrew of the old traditional-style spiral, or you can call it a "helix," a good corkscrew should be an open-centered wire spiral. It ought to have an open center so that a toothpick could run right down through the center of it. It should not have a solid metal shank running through the center that would block any such toothpick if you tried to give it the little old toothpick test. So when you analyze why it needs to be that way and what was wrong with a solid shank being through the center of the corkscrew, it comes down to something like this: that if you have a solid metal shank running through

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*A condensed version of the report was given in the May, 1946, Wine Review under the title "Corkscrews That Work!"

Timothy: the corkscrew, and you screw that down into the cork, you're damaging a lot of cork tissue in a straight line right down through the center. When you pull hard, you're going to rip a hole right through the cork; quite likely you will if the cork sticks very tight at all to the bottle.

We also learned that there's a kind of natural wax in natural cork, and it tends to adhere or stick like glue, you might say, quite tight to the glass. So when you begin to pull a cork, you've got to break that seal between the cork and the glass, and then the cork will come much more freely after that first seal has been broken.

The Wine Institute, in running a series of scientific tests on corkscrews and corks, found out that this open wire spiral was important, just as I have said to you, so what I've recounted comes from that study. I don't think anybody anywhere in the world prior to 1946, when the Wine Institute study was published, had conducted any such scientific study of corkscrews. Now, the Wine Institute, in conducting that test did things like this: they would take some corks and glue them with some sort of a good cement into the bottle, and then test how many pounds of pull they could put on a corkscrew to either break that cork loose or to rip a hole through the cork. They wanted to find out which corks had most strength or whatever, and which corkscrews had real purchase inside that cork. And they found out that a good open wire spiral of good diameter, about one-third of an inch, is about the best. I think this one is about a third of an inch. This one is undoubtedly a little bit smaller.

Teiser: The first one you're showing us is a traditional waiter's corkscrew, is that right?

Timothy: Yes, the first one is a traditional waiter-type corkscrew, a folding corkscrew that a waiter can carry in his pocket. It has a little jack lever device at the side of it that is used by putting it over against the edge of the glass on the bottle, and then when you pull on this it's like lifting the handle on a claw hammer to pull a nail. You get a lot of leverage, and the leverage is based on the distance between the center of this pin in the jack lever hinge and the center of that pin in the screw hinge, and the length of the handle from this screw hinge pin back down this way to its end. This handle is longer than this distance right here between the pins. Now I haven't measured this, but the distance between this pin and this one would be pretty close to one inch, and this distance from this

Timothy: pin out to this end of the handle is around four, four and a half inches, something like that.

So now, if you have four inches of length here and one inch of distance here, you're going to get a four-to-one leverage. Pulling a nail with a claw hammer, the handle of the hammer is a lot longer than four inches, so then you're going to get much greater leverage with a handle of a hammer than with what I'm describing here on a corkscrew. At any rate, that leverage principle is quite important, and any good corkscrew should have some sort of a leverage device engineered into it.

This type of corkscrew is a double wood body thing, with two handles on the top, the small handle to turn the corkscrew into the cork and the larger handle to rotate on a wooden thread and to pull the cork out of the bottle. With this one, you insert the corkscrew into the cork, you hold the bottle on top of the table, and then hold both the corkscrew and the bottle while you rotate the larger handle, twisting it to bring the cork out. By the time you have twisted that up to the top, the cork is back up in here, and it's already out of the bottle. So this type of corkscrew is very good for someone who doesn't have a lot of muscular strength. All you have to do is rotate those two handles and the cork is out. This corkscrew happens to have a very good open wire spiral, and so this corkscrew is, in my opinion, about the most foolproof type there is, and this was the one most highly recommended by the Wine Institute study.

Now, did you say you had a complete copy of that old Wine Institute study on corkscrews?

Teiser: No, I don't.

Timothy: I have, since I'm in the business of collecting corkscrews as well as doing a lot of other things and being able to answer questions on what's wrong with a certain corkscrew. Since I did get started in that whole thing, (and you know I've collected more than 1200 corkscrews) I had some interest, too, in trying to learn what I could about the history of corkscrews and about other things like this scientific test that the Wine Institute made.

Teiser: We see now so often the kind of metal corkscrew that has two arms that come up, and you push those down to pull the cork. Was that in common use when they made the Wine Institute study?

Timothy: I think those were around, I think they were available when the Wine Institute made its study. That type of corkscrew is one of those things; most of them are not well made. The leverage principle is fine, and these two wing levers that come out--I like the whole leverage principle, the whole idea, very well, but most don't have a good metal screw.

This other little thing with the two prongs, you see, if you hold it perfectly upright, the longer one is going to touch the cork first. You'd have to put it in crooked if you were going to do it the other way. So you make sure you start with the longer prong. You begin to wiggle it down right there between the cork and the glass, then you get the other one started, then you rock it.

Now, some of these with the prongs (let's say north is that way and this one is south) are made where these things are east and west directions of the handle instead of the north and south direction of the handle, so that then you'd have to rock it this way back and forth instead of sideways. You rock it towards the points, you know, to get it in. If you try to push both down at the same time, just a straight push, you'll tend to push the cork in. Then if I pull straight up, I'll pull the corkscrew out and leave the cork in. But I rotate now; I pull up only a very little while rotating. Now I'd like to have the thing in a little deeper; I'm getting it in a little deeper.

Teiser: This is a corkscrew that gives you a second chance?

Timothy: Yes, that's right. Every restaurant ought to have one of these things lying around, just in case they need to remove a cork that has a hole ripped in it by another corkscrew. This corkscrew is not as foolproof as that double wood body corkscrew. When you get off center, you're going to twist these points out of condition and maybe bend the metal. It's a sort of a spring steel, but it's not very thick.

This corkscrew has been said to be the butler's friend. Now, what that means is that the butler can pull the cork out of his master's wine and drink some and then replace it with an inferior wine, and he can put the cork back in again and the master can't find a hole in the cork. [Laughter] So, this is the butler's friend.

Teiser: What do <u>you</u> call it?

Timothy: Well, I call this type a two-pronged corkscrew. It's not really a screw; you can call it a two-pronged cork remover.

My mother was born in 1873, and she has passed away now. (She would be one hundred years old if she were alive.) My mother said that when she was a girl they had these corkscrews with the two prongs around. And then, I found one in an old antique shop with a patent date on it and kind of primitively built. A lot of them are built with more parts, more complicated than this, indicating that they couldn't mass produce it. I think it has the date 1868 on it. So I think that that was probably the first patent of any corkscrew with these two prongs. My mother would have been a girl around that time; so when she was ten years old, the corkscrew patent was, let's say, fifteen years old.

Teiser: Someone gave us one of the kind that you pump air into the bottle to force the cork out.

Timothy: They're pretty good, and they don't do any harm to the wine either. People raise all kinds of funny questions about "do they spoil the wine?" I don't see that they do. Did you have one that was like an air pump? Or did it have gas?

Teiser: No, it was like a bicycle pump.

Timothy: Well, I like that kind better than the ones that use a propellant gas. There are several of those gas operated corkscrews on the market. There are some that operate with CO_2 gas, carbon dioxide gas. There's others that operate with Freon gas; that's a refrigerant gas. Then the other ones with an air pump; there's a number of different manufacturers of those too. I don't find that those corkscrews that use a propellant gas do anything to spoil the wine. I haven't noticed that even from the ones with Freon.

People do also raise this kind of question: they say, "Well, it might be dangerous. The bottle might explode in your hands, and you'd better wrap the bottle with a towel." I've never had any kind of problem like that either. I don't know if anybody's ever exploded a bottle with one of these CO_2 powered corkscrews, but I guess it is possible if the bottle is a little defective.

Teiser: To get back to your corkscrew collection--I think you told a little about a purchase you'd made--a whole collection that had come to you.

Timothy: Yes, I bought a whole collection from a Mr. Joe Vasconi of St. Helena for $2000. It amounted to about 368 corkscrews that are on display in one of our cabinets in St. Helena.

Teiser: They've been kept together?

Timothy: We've kept this collection all together. Now, each corkscrew in our collection is serially numbered too, has a little code number marked on it. So they've gotten catalogued, and we've gotten them insured, and then this Joe Vasconi collection we've kept separate from the others--pretty much so. If anybody's got some of them mixed up, we could re-separate them, because they are serial numbered.

Now, there's another addition to the collection that is interesting. A Mr. Jim Howe passed away over in Walnut Creek,* and he was also a corkscrew collector. He had about 165 corkscrews, and he willed them to me. So after his death, I received those corkscrews. Now Jim Howe was an interesting old retired journalist. He had once been a foreign correspondent for one of the major press services, you know, like Associated Press. He was the China correspondent, and he was a foreign correspondent at other times in other parts of the world. He lived in China for a number of years. He developed an interest in a lot of things, and in later life he became quite a wine judge, too, and quite a wine taster--you might say an enthusiastic wine buff. He even opened up a little winery on his own property in a little old basement cellar built down under an old windmill tower or whatever it was. Right on the edge of Walnut Creek is where he had this. Jim Howe was a very unusual and interesting man.

He was the son of a famous editor,** also, who had worked in Kansas. I think he was born in Atchison, Kansas.

To indicate how interesting the man was and what unusual things he got involved in--he had a collection of things called "pigeon whistles," and he willed those to the University of California at Berkeley I think. A pigeon whistle is a thing that you fasten on the pigeon, and when the pigeon flies, it

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*April 15, 1970.

**Ed Howe.

Timothy: screeches and whistles--the air moving through this thing. And the idea is that over in China, where you want to protect your rice crop or whatever from the birds, you get some pigeons, and you equip your pigeons with these hand-made pigeon whistles, little things built of very light-weight material. And your pigeons go flying around screeching, and they sound like a hawk or whatever. Each whistle sounds a little different. They scare the birds away, to keep the birds from eating your grain. [Laughter]

Harroun: In his corkscrew collection, did he have some from China?

Timothy: Oh, no, apparently nobody ever made a corkscrew in China.

Now, the other thing I want to say about Jim Howe is that he had--I don't know if he got it as a gift from some old business or if he went and bought it some place--a set of dental tools, like an old-fashioned dentist would use, the kind that were actively in use about forty or fifty years ago. But with these dental tools, he would build some corkscrews. He would get some tusk or a horn, and then he would get some wire corkscrew--he might buy some cheap corkscrew in a market some place or in a hardware store, and he would remove the metal part from the handle, and then he would put on a more ornate hand-made handle. He would take something, say, like the horn of a cow, you know, so big. The horns of animals like cows have a kind of a nerve within them, making the horn hollow. The nerve carries the blood supply and whatnot up into the horn. Well, when you have the horn of a cow, then, it's an old dehydrated thing; all this fleshy part of it is removed so it's open on the one end like this.

So then this Jim Howe would take these dental tools or some little old scroll saw or something, and at this open end--and of course, it would be circular at the end there--he would take something, and he would saw some teeth in here; he'd make a mouth, this way. [Laughter] If he'd cut this out this way in that little triangle of this horn from here, down in this end, the sharp point of the horn, he'd cut a little slot down there and then he'd stick this little piece that he took out of here; he'd put it down in there and it would make the tail of the fish. So here's the fish with his mouth open and a little tail back there. And maybe he'd take the other piece that came out of this side and put it on the back for a fin, you know, a dorsal fin. Then, he'd glue something in place for a couple of eyes or drill a couple of little holes for eyes for this fish or shark.

Timothy: This was just things he'd do for a hobby--just for pastime. But that would be made into a corkscrew; the corkscrew part of it would stick out from one part of it.

So he did a lot of monkey business like that with these old dental tools. And he had a jewelry store make up a little tiny corkscrew about that big, not much bigger than a little sugar cube. He'd have a little tiny thing like that made up in a jewelry shop to give to me as a gift, so that I could say that the smallest corkscrew in my collection came from Jim Howe. [Laughter]

Now, somebody--I think one of the Wentes, I think Herman Wente or Ernest Wente--you know they have a blacksmith's shop on the ranch where they make a lot of their own tools--did you know that? You've interviewed Ernest Wente;* did you get Herman Wente on tape too?

Teiser: No, he'd died before we started.

Timothy: Well, they do a lot of interesting things out there, make a lot of their own cultivating tools and all kinds of things. I think that one of the Wentes or one of the workers in their little old home blacksmith's shop twisted up a left-handed corkscrew and gave it to Jim Howe so that he'd have a left-handed corkscrew in his collection. [Laughter] You know, most corkscrews you twist to the right. You twist them clockwise, if you look down at the top of it. They twisted one so he had a left-handed corkscrew; you had to turn it the other way to get it into the cork.

Teiser: Where is your collection physically stored now?

Timothy: Oh, it's on display, on the second floor at the old Greystone cellar. Except the duplicates. Haven't you seen any of them?

Teiser: Not the Greystone cellar. We've seen some in the tasting room here.

Timothy: Yes, there's about a hundred and twenty-five or a hundred and fifty that are here. We have a little bit of a traveling display--

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*Ernest A. Wente, Wine Making in the Livermore Valley, an interview in this series completed in 1971.

Timothy: another seventy-five or so--that we allow to travel around once in a while. But the largest part of the collection is on public display at St. Helena. Most of those that are not at St. Helena are duplicates or very close to being duplicates of those that are on display.

THE WINE MUSEUM

Teiser: What will go into the Fromm & Sichel museum?

Timothy: They're going to call it The Wine Museum of San Francisco, housing The Christian Brothers Collection, you know, because they are our distributing firm; they sell our products. We have no financial interest in the museum itself. It's their building; they're building the main office for their firm. And San Francisco is the main headquarters of Fromm & Sichel. Some years ago it used to be New York, but it's been San Francisco for about the last fifteen years, I guess. They are going to have a lot of artifacts having to do with wine. They're going to have a lot of printed things, including graphic arts. They're going to have all kinds of things. And then there are some three-dimensional artifacts of various kinds--little statuettes and little images of workers in the vineyards. Lots of things of interest, and lots of things of great historical interest. Some of these things date way, way back.

There's this wood carved statue of St. Genevieve of Paris that dates from about 1490 or so, and it's supposed to be carved in linden wood. There's also a very handsome little statue of St. Urban of Langres, one of the districts of France. St. Genevieve of Paris is said to be the patronness of the wine growers of the area near Paris. The St. Genevieve of Paris statue is holding a little model of a church, the church of St. Genevieve, in one hand, and then I think in the other hand, a cluster of grapes, indicating she's the patronness of the wine growers. Then St. Urban, he's holding a missal or a bible, and on top of the book is a cluster of grapes, indicating that he's the patron of the wine growers of that area, Langres.

Now, I have asked how many of the corkscrews they might want for the collection. I asked that question when Norman Fromm was still alive, and he passed away several years ago. Now, Mr.

Timothy: Ernest Mittelberger is in charge of setting up the program for the displays, and in general fitting the collection together to the floor space, and so on, and actually organizing it and handling all the details of it. I sent them a big group of corkscrews about seventy-five. I told them they could have all of them on, let's say, permanent loan from me or from the Christian Brothers, or they could select from that group and send back to me whatever they didn't want. Well, they kept about twelve.

They expect to vary their program of display. Now there are lots of books about wine. I have a book collection, too, and so does Alfred Fromm. And there are just thousands of books about wine that either I or they have at our disposal. So they might feature books one month, and the next month they might feature something else.

Wine glasses too. There's an extensive wine glass collection that were basically collected by Franz Sichel. He is also deceased, probably about eight or nine years ago.

Harroun: Was that exhibited at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor?

Timothy: Yes, that glass collection was displayed at the Palace of the Legion of Honor about four years ago. That's quite an interesting collection of glasses.

Teiser: Do you ever expect to do a book on your corkscrew collection?

Timothy: Well, this interview is about the nearest thing I've ever done to a book. In other words, if somebody other than me would do all the work, that would be fine.

Teiser: You have other things to do!

Timothy: I just don't think I'll ever have the time to put together anything in the way of a worthwhile book.

Teiser: I hope you're putting together at least notes on the corkscrews.

Timothy: We have a kind of catalogue, you know--at least, they're reasonably well identified. We have each corkscrew described with a little bit of written description. We put this together mostly for, oh, our own guidance in knowing what we've got, so we can look through a pile of papers and visualize the collection. Also,

Timothy: for reasons like this, we carry insurance on the corkscrews, and if something would happen to a lot of them--let's say ten corkscrews were stolen or something like that, because of our little catalogue numbers on them, we could identify which were those ten that were stolen. If our inventory didn't count out right, we could identify which were the ones that disappeared and maybe our insurance company then would be satisfied with our documentation, paying us for the loss of those ten corkscrews. I don't think we've collected anything yet from the insurance company on any of the corkscrews. About the most we've ever lost was two corkscrews that were stolen from a locked case when they were on display in a department store in New York; there were about one hundred corkscrews that were in the display, and they were in locked cases. Somebody managed to pick one lock or something; anyway, they claimed that two corkscrews disappeared out of this cabinet while it was locked. Now, I can't prove this, and I wasn't there. I was out here in California.

Transcriber: Keiko Sugimoto
Final Typist: Keiko Sugimoto

APPENDIX I

THE HISTORY OF
THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS WINERIES
IN CALIFORNIA

by

Brother Justin Meyer

May 5, 1966

"Christian Brothers is not a family name, but rather is the name of a religious teaching Order of the Roman Catholic Church. The income derived from their winemaking business is primarily used to finance the educational goals of the Order." These are the words of a tour guide which I overheard while walking through The Christian Brothers Aging Cellars at St. Helena recently. But, how frequently at wine tastings and other functions have I had to explain this distinction myself? Today The Christian Brothers products have become so well known nationwide that even those who are not acquainted with the Brothers primary work of Christian education know the name "Christian Brothers" for excellence in production of wines, champagne, vermouth and brandy.

When in 1881*, in Martinez, California, Brother Victorick experimented with his first lot of wine, little did he realize the far reaching results his product would have. The Brothers had purchased 70 acres of land in 1879 in Martinez principally for a site for their novitiate, or training center for young Brothers. With the property was included 12 acres of vineyard.

In 1882, with the permission of his superior, Brother Victorick, along with Brother Cecilian, crushed the second year's grapes in a water trough, using as a crusher a large club at the end of a handle which they called a "mule's leg".[1]

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*The pamphlet, "History of Winemaking at Martinez", says 1891, but this does not agree with several other dates. It is presumed that this was a misprint and the actual date was 1881.

[1] See literature cited for references.

Evidently the experiment was a success, so much so that in 1883 the "mule's leg" was abandoned and a crusher and some tanks were purchased. By 1887 the Brothers were purchasing grapes from their neighbors, Mr. Babatt and Mr. Frasher, and commenced to sell wines for commercial purposes.[2] Brother Azarie, the genial successor of Brother Victorick, operated the winery until his death in 1897. He came to be known as "the schoolmaster of viticulture" for the whole neighborhood of Martinez.[3]

It is known that Brother Raphael was assigned to Martinez in 1904 and headed the winery until 1935.[4] In between the death of Brother Azarie and the arrival of Brother Raphael it seems that Brother Cecilian, described as "a very good, very faithful, if rugged workman" filled in as operator of the winery. Brother Victorick, who started the winemaking and then devoted most of his time to other employments at Martinez until 1911, probably guided the work of Brother Cecilian. It is recalled by Brother U. Basil, now retired at Mont La Salle, Napa, that Brother Victorick taught Brother Raphael the rudiments of wine production, and frequently would take him to meet and visit with the local Italians to ask questions and learn more about the art.[5]

In 1904 the business had proven profitable enough that a new three-story winery building was erected in Martinez. This building was constructed incorporating all of the modern conveniences of the industry at that time. The hand cranked crusher and press were found on the third floor. Lugs full of grapes were transported from the delivery wagons up a tram-way by the power of a horse-drawn conveyor. On the second floor were the fermenting tanks from which the new wine was drained

to the aging cooperage on the ground floor. All wine was moved by gravity flow. Not until many years later was the first electric pump, a one-horsepower unit with a one inch discharge, purchased. No room was provided for bottling because at the time most of the wine was sold to Priests, Brothers or commercially as bulk wine in small kegs and barrels.[6]

Yet, with all this success and progress, the wines must have left something to be desired by present quality standards. Brother Raphael's training in winemaking was spotty and his favorite motto: "hard work makes good wine" indicates more good desire than skill and ability. During the period Mr. A. J. Salazar, "one of the best experts in wines," was hired as a consultant winemaker to do tasting and blending.[7]

The advent of prohibition in 1919 didn't seem to affect the Brothers operation too adversely because they were able to continue production of sacramental and medicinal wines. If anything, prohibition proved providential for the Brothers. By 1930 it seems that the town of Martinez was expanding and encroaching on the Brothers property and privacy, which was not desirable for the spiritual training of the young Brothers. Because of this the Brothers began to search for a new site for their Novitiate. It so happened that the Giersberger winery, 8 miles northwest of Napa, was for sale. Mr. Theodore Gier, owner of the winery and 338 acres of surrounding land, was feeling the economic effects of prohibition. The grape juice business was not too profitable and bootlegging was risky. So on May 29, 1930 the Brothers purchased the property and began construction of the monastery, which was completed and ready for occupation on April 11, 1932. The history of the purchase indicates that

there were 100,000 gallons of dry wine included in the transaction.[8] This is a little confusing, because according to law Mr. Gier was not supposed to have made any wine between 1919 and 1930. It could have been that this was grape juice which could be easily converted by fermentation into wine. Or, considering the state of winemaking technology at the time, it might have been that it was almost impossible to prevent "wild fermentations" from converting the stored grape juice to wine. Old time "bootleggers" tell of methods of hiding illegal wine such as putting a layer of denser grape juice on the bottom of a tank and floating the lighter wine on top of the juice. Then if an inspector required a sample it was drawn from a spigot at the bottom of the tank and only juice was drawn. The fact is that the Brothers acquired 100,000 gallons of dry "wine" with the purchase.

Brother Timothy, present Cellarmaster of The Christian Brothers, recalls being assigned in the summer of 1931 to help Brother Raphael and Mr. Frank Sommer, cooper and winemaker at the Giersberger winery, to dismantle and move several tanks from Martinez to Napa. 54,000 gallons of "nearly sweet wine" were also moved to the new home. The City of Martinez owned the Martinez-Benicia ferry, which at the time was the only way across that part of the bay. Brother Timothy recalls that the city allowed the Brothers to move everything across the ferry at no charge. It is not certain whether this was because of the city's special esteem for the Brothers or a sign of their extreme joy at seeing the Brothers move.[9]

The Napa property dates back to 1864 when a Mr. H. Hudemann laid out the central gardens of the estate. He also planted the initial vineyard some time before 1882, the year when he was forced out of his property by a number of material misfortunes. He had been concentrating on raising cattle and sheep, the vineyard having been more of a hobby and a new adventure. When forced to sell and leave the property, Mr. Hudemann did so at night, being unable - as he is reported to have said - to part with it in full view of all its beauty and charms.

In 1884 Rudolf Jordan bought the ranch which was then called the "Spout Farm" for its numerous springs. He first changed the name to "Lotus Farm", being fond of an Egyptian Lotus that grew in the artificial lake on the grounds. Later, after having planted 75 more acres of vineyard, the place became known as "Lotus Vineyard". Jordan sold it to Theodore Gier in 1900. It was Jordan who wrote in July, 1930:

> "When the writer was informed that this place had been acquired by The Christian Brothers for an educational institution, he felt that it had finally come into proper hands, because the influence of its wooded hills cannot help but be beneficial in the education of young men. For its quiet seclusion should further the contemplation of the Infinite Mind in the deep shade of its eternal redwoods."

Gier, impressed by Sequoia Gigantea tree which Hudemann had planted, and which had developed to a healthy, living monument to this man's name, called his property "Sequoia Vineyard." Gier himself went into grape growing and wine-making. He planted additional acres of grapes and built

a spacious stone wine cellar in 1903. As a wine merchandiser he met early success based to a large extent on his tireless striving for quality. With the advent of Prohibition, however, the years of prosperity ended and his fortune declined until he sold out to the Brothers in 1930.[10]

1934 marks the beginning of an important chapter in the winery history. Not only had Prohibition ended, bringing new life to the industry, but it also was the year of the appointment of Brother S. John to the winery staff.[11] He started out as many other Brothers in the history of the operation, as a barrel scrubber. Within a year's time he had advanced to the position of general manager because of circumstances as well as his business knowledge acquired before he joined the Brothers. It seems that there were some differences of opinion between Brother John and his superior in the winery, Brother Raphael, which hurried this advance. Both were deeply religious men of strong principle. Brother Raphael was a believer in the strict, literal interpretation of the law. He would frequently command the younger Brother to repeat jobs or to do works of questionable value simply to test his obedience. While these procedures might have been calculated to instill the perfect obedience and patience, they seemed to have little basis as sound business practices. Several other factors disturbed Brother John. While he respected the older Brother he was quick to find that Brother Raphael's training in winemaking did not enable him to answer many questions crucial to the production of fine wines. In addition, Brother John found that the old winemaker was blind to the fact that some secular

representatives were dishonestly taking advantage of the Brothers. Finally, under the burden of all these factors, the young Brother approached the Brother Provincial and confessed that if something wasn't done to improve the existing situation he could not continue in this work. Recognizing the honesty of the young Brother, the Provincial put him in complete charge of the winery.[12] Soon, Brother Raphael, after many years of devoted service to God and his Order, was retired at Mont La Salle where he spent his last years until his death in 1944.[13]

One of Brother John's first projects was to enroll part time at the University of California in Berkeley in the Food Science and Winemaking classes of Professor W. V. Cruess. This was typical of his thorough grass-root approach to everything. Among the first purchases of the new manager were a pasteurizer and a refrigeration unit.[14] This would seem to substantiate the previous observation that the wines made during Brother Raphael's time were probably not of very high quality.

There were many stability problems with the wine, and with his newly acquired knowledge from the university and this added equipment, Brother John hoped to resolve them. Brother John was so important in the history of The Christian Brothers winery that if this paper did not convey an accurate and complete picture of him to the reader it would certainly be an injustice. And yet, in a work of this size, such a comprehensive picture would be almost impossible. Brother John's death at the age of 49 on April 16, 1962 came as a shock to

everyone associated with him. A quote from Brother T. Jerome, Provincial of The Christian Brothers at the time of Brother John's death, gives us a bit of an insight into the Brother's personality: "We Brothers recognize in Brother John an astute businessman, the man who built The Christian Brothers winery."

Brother John, in spite of his business success, felt that one of his greatest achievements was the establishment of a free grammar school for boys and girls, St. La Salle School at Reedley. But one would be incorrect to think of Brother John as a shrewd businessman who had built this school as a pet project and a source of relaxation when he visited it. Mr. Herman Archinal, manager of The Christian Brothers Reedley winery, recalls how Brother John used to delight in sitting in the school yard to observe the children during lunch period. Mr. Archinal describes Brother John as a "student of human nature".[15] It was in the school yard where, observing uninhibited children, he learned so much about the people with whom he had to deal in the business world.

He could watch two children playing and predict if a fight or a friendship was soon to develop. In the same way he was noted for his ability to diagnose persons with whom he had to do business. Dishonesty did not surprise him because he frequently expected it from certain people. Always vitally interested in everything and everyone around him, Brother John impressed everyone he met as a vibrant and dynamic personality.

In 1935 Brother Timothy joined the winery staff. Four years earlier he had been assigned to the summer job of moving several wine tanks from Martinez to Napa. Now he was back at

the winery to stay. Thirty-one years later he is still very active as Cellarmaster of The Christian Brothers winery.

The next ten years were extremely difficult for the Brothers operation. Mont La Salle had been purchased in the depths of the depression on little more collateral than faith. From 1930 until the early forties the Brothers were constantly in debt to the extent that at one time papers were drawn up for the sale of the winery, and all acreage except for ten acres which included the monastery proper. Faith and diligence, and shrewd work by Brother John and financial advisors, enabled the Brothers to go on.

The 1940's brought prosperity to all business. The winery and liquor business was no exception. The principal problem was now to supply the demand. In 1941 the Brothers had begun to blend and sell brandy. In the early forties the brandy business was doing so well, that in 1945 when the Mount Tivy Winery in Reedley, California was put up for sale, the Brothers were ready to expand their business operation.[16]

With the purchase of the Mount Tivy Winery the Brothers acquired a considerable inventory of brandy and sweet wines. Up until this time the Brothers had not made any of their own commercial brandy. The still at Mont La Salle had been used only to make high proof, or fortifying brandy. All commercial brandy had been bought from other wineries, then aged and blended by the Brothers.

In 1947 a new Vulcan still was purchased, and a fine distiller, Mr. Phil Brighton, was hired. Much of the success

and quality of The Christian Brothers brandy is attributed to the genius of this demanding perfectionist. Today the Brothers may have the largest inventory of brandy in the world.

The purchase of this new plant enabled the Brothers to divide their operation so that the sweet wines, vermouth and brandy would all be produced in the warmer San Joaquin Valley, where the climate is more conducive to production of grapes suitable for this purpose.

At the same time the dry wine sales were constantly increasing and the Brothers found themselves once again cramped for space. In 1945, in need of more storage space for dry wines, the Brothers rented cooperage from Roma Wine Company in the old Greystone cellars at St. Helena. By 1950 the Brothers were leasing one million gallons of storage space, and in April of that year bought the old stone winery from Cresta Blanca, owned by Schenley Industries. This building has quite an interesting history.

What prompted the construction of what is reputed to be the "largest stone winery in the world" in an area of relatively small grape acreage? The reason is unique in California's wine history. By 1880 the rapid development of the vineyards in the Napa Valley resulted in nearly 12,000 acres devoted to wine-grape growing. This closely approximates the present day plantings. Although many small wineries were in operation, growers depended mainly on the bulk wine market in San Francisco for an outlet. This market had become highly competitive, and under such adverse conditions Napa Valley wines were subject to many vicious price-fixing practices and dictatorial policies

set forth by San Francisco wine merchants. It was estimated that the wine growers loss of revenue under these conditions exceeded $50,000 annually. With a firm resolve to fight back, the growers banded together seeking a means to rescue the Napa Valley wine business from the influence of the price-fixing combine.

In the forefront of this effort to rescue the wine business from economic chaos was William B. Bourn II. Rancher, financier, president of the San Francisco Spring Valley Water Works, and later developer of the old Empire Gold Mine at Grass Valley, Bourn possessed rare qualities of leadership. With bold imagination and a keen sense of business acumen, Bourn conceived the idea of erecting a huge wine cellar equipped with the finest cooperage to bring Napa Valley wines to maturity, and then to market them as a quality product. Such an operation would provide the growers a facility to store their wines at a nominal cost, and, equally important, permit them to borrow money on their wines to continue their farming operations. (Wine at that time was not considered acceptable collateral for bank loans).

Obviously, such a facility would require considerable capital. Subsidies were arranged whereby one hundred growers would subscribe five percent of their grape crop for a period of three years to finance the project. With some capital provided by Bourn and his partner, Mr. Everett Wise, together with the grape subsidies, sufficient funds were raised to initiate the project. Construction started in April 1888.[17] On June 18, 1888 the cornerstone was laid.[18] By autumn of that year sufficient progress had been made to accommodate the crop

of that year. By the end of 1889 construction was essentially complete, including a distillery with a capacity of one thousand gallons per day. The incredibly short period of time taken to build the winery not only signifies the urgency of the project, but illustrates the singleness of purpose and drive exerted by Bourn to bring it to completion.

Unfortunately, soon after the completion of the winery, the phylloxera plague hit the valley in 1894 doing away with any grape surplus. The same year the winery was sold to Mr. Charles Carpy.[19] This was the first of six sales of the winery, which, because of its tremendous size, became a real "white elephant". Among its owners have been Bisceglia Brothers, Central California Wineries and Schenley Industries. The low point in the proud old building's history was in 1931, when in the economic hardships of the depression and prohibition the entire property was auctioned at $10,000.[20]

At the present "Greystone" is used as an aging cellar for dry wines and is the center of the Brothers champagne production. Mr. Auguste Pirio is the champagne maker in charge of the Charmat process production.

A very important feature in recent history has been the winery's participation in the Los Angeles County and the California State Fairs. The Brothers came to the Napa Valley long after many of the other name wineries had been long established. No business or industry is overjoyed at the prospect of new competition. These monks would have to prove their worth and quality and make a name for themselves. The Brothers had several factors working against them; one obvious

drawback was that being religious, the Brothers were not much for social functions, and consequently, didn't do the selling job that many other winery operators could. There was another aspect connected with the Brothers being religious; for many reasons, one being respect for those who conscientiously think that religious shouldn't be in the wine or spirit business, the Brothers shunned publicity. They did this even to the extent of not letting any pictures be taken by reporters or giving articles on the winery. Writers are not soon to forget, and today it is not infrequent that the Brothers wines are noticibly absent in articles on California wines. The results of the fair wine judgings of the last ten years should seem to indicate that these writers who overlook the Brothers wines are not basing their choices on quality alone.

Beginning in 1949 the Brothers started to enter some wines in the fair judgings at Sacramento and Los Angeles. At the time most of the premium wineries were represented. In 1955 it was decided that it was time to see how the Brothers wines stood up quality wise to anything in the fair. It was time for the young Napa Valley winery to seat itself with the elders, and either be accepted or humiliated. The results have been most gratifying and reassuring, to the Brothers winery at least.

Beginning in 1955, and including every year up to the present, the Brothers wines have won more awards each year than any other winery. In the open division of the two fairs The Christian Brothers wines have won 186 gold medals, 219 silver, 180 bronze and 90 honorable mentions. 291 of these awards have been top in their class. This may happen when the judges feel that no wines

in a class deserves a gold medal. Then the top award may be a silver or bronze medal. In the special division, which is more limited, the Brothers wines have done just as well: 100 first awards, 68 seconds, 54 thirds and 5 merit awards. In all, this amounts to some 1,002 awards in the last 11 years, a recognition of constant striving for quality.[21]

In recent years the Brothers have taken steps to insure continued quality standards in their operation. The Brothers have acquired nearly 1,000 acres of vineyard in the Napa Valley, and another 1,000 in the San Joaquin Valley, to insure themselves of a basic supply of the varietal grapes desired to produce fine wines and brandy. This represents a small portion of the grapes needed for the size of the operation today, but at the same time is the nucleus of each year's vintage.

Last year a new warehouse was opened at St. Helena primarily for the storage of bottled table wines. Much is said about the aging of wines in wooden casks and tanks. Anyone who is acquainted with the quality factor known as bottle bouquet can attest to the benefits of additional bottle aging, or "binning" as it is called. It was for this purpose that a warehouse with the floor-space of a football field was built to accommodate approximately 160,000 cases of bottled wines. Connected to the warehouse is a progressive one million gallon stainless steel bulk wine storage cellar, which will be used primarily in the storage of white table wines.

At present a mammoth warehouse, larger than that at St. Helena, is under construction at Reedley for the storage of bottled wines and brandy.

Seventy-five years later the results of Brother Victorick's experiment might cause him to blink his eyes in disbelief. And yet basically, nothing has changed. This simple Brother long ago started a small enterprise to help his Institute to carry out its primary work. Today many may view The Christian Brothers winery as a large business, one which has received notable recognition in its field. Yet any of the Brothers involved in the winery will tell you that it is only a small part of a great picture. These Brothers, who at one time joined a religious congregation for the purpose of helping and educating young people, have been appointed to the challenge of becoming the best winemakers and businessmen possible so that through the support of the winery The Christian Brothers might continue their work in Christian education.

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APPENDIX II

HISTORY OF GREYSTONE

Built 1888 and 1889 by William Bowers Bourn II and Everett E. Wise.

Sold May 26, 1894 by William B. Bourn II to Charles Carpy and Company.

Sold August 10, 1894 by Carpy to California Wine Association (CWA was incorporated on that date).

Sold April 1, 1925 by CWA to Bisceglia Brothers of San Jose.

Sold January 16, 1931 by Bisceglia Brothers to California Vineyards Company.

Sold December 31, 1932 by California Vineyards Company to Bisceglia Brothers at public auction for $10,000.

Ownership transferred in 1938 from Bisceglia Brothers to Bank of America.

Sold April 19, 1940 by Bank of America to Central California Wineries, Incorporated.

Sold November 20, 1942 by Central California Wineries, Inc. to Schenley.

Sold April 27, 1950 by Schenley to St. Helena Wine Cellars, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Mont La Salle Vineyards, which was dissolved by merger with Mont La Salle Vineyards on March 31, 1971.

Corrected March 5, 1974
Brother Timothy

APPENDIX III

the Christian Brothers P. O. BOX 420, NAPA, CALIFORNIA 94558 · TEL 707-226-5600

THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS WINE AND CHAMPAGNE CELLARS

by Carl Wehr

Visitors to the Napa Valley, driving along State Highway #29, are invariably awed when, just north of St. Helena, they suddenly come upon a hugh castle-like stone building set imposingly against a hillside. Originally called Greystone, this massive structure built of sandstone and rising three stories above ground level, is identified as The Christian Brothers Wine and Champagne Cellars.

Long a landmark in upper Napa Valley, this winery has played an important role in the history of winemaking in this region. It is the principal aging cellars of the Christian Brothers for their production of fine Napa Valley table wines. Complete facilities for the production of their champagne and other sparkling wines are also contained in this building.

The purpose of constructing what is reputed to be the "largest stone winery in the world" here in an area of relatively small grape acreage is unique in California's wine history. By 1880 the rapid development of vineyards in the valley had resulted in eleven thousand acres of wine-grape plantings. Although many small wineries were in operation, growers depended mainly on the bulk wine market in San

Francisco for an outlet. This market had become highly competitive and, under such adverse conditions, Napa Valley wines were not given the consideration due a fine vintage. Moreover, vicious price fixing practices and dictatorial policies established by the wine merchants were thoroughly demoralizing to the valley growers. It was estimated their loss in revenue under these conditions exceeded $50,000 annually. With a firm resolve to fight back, the growers banded together, seeking a means to rescue the valley wine business from the influence of the price fixing combine.

In the forefront of this effort to rescue the valley wine business from economic chaos was William B. Bourn. Rancher, financier, president of San Francisco Spring Valley Water Works, and later developer of the Empire Gold Mine at Grass Valley, Bourn possessed rare qualities of leadership. With bold imagination and a keen sense of business acumen, Bourn conceived the idea of erecting a hugh wine cellar, equipped with the finest cooperage, to bring Napa Valley wines to maturity, and then to market them as a quality product.

Such an operation would provide the growers with a facility to store their wines at a nominal cost; and, equally important, permit them to borrow money on their wines to continue their farming operations. (Wine was not at that time considered acceptable collateral for bank loans). Obviously such a facility would require considerable capital. Sub-

sidies were arranged whereby one hundred growers would subscribe five percent of their grape crop for a period of three years to finance the project. With some capital provided by Bourn and his partner, Everett Wise, together with the grape subsidies, sufficient funds were raised.

Construction started in April, 1888. On June 18, 1888, the cornerstone was laid in the southeast corner of the building. By autumn of that year sufficient progress had been made to accommodate the crop for that year. By the end of 1889, construction was essentially complete, including a distillery with a capacity of one thousand gallons per day. The incredibly short period of time taken to build the winery (less than two years) not only signifies the urgency of the project, but illustrates the singleness of purpose and drive exerted by Bourn to bring it to completion.

Thus today, Greystone stands as a monument to those growers who, nearly a century ago, had faith in the quality of their wines. Their conviction has been confirmed as attested by the prestige with which Napa Valley wines are regarded by wine connoisseurs throughout the world.

Not only is the massiveness and beauty of this building arresting. Equally remarkable is the planning and foresight which attended its construction with respect to plant layout. With little modification, the transition from 19th century operation to modern methods and equipment, has been smoothly effected. This can be better appreciated by examining the

building in more detail.

The building measures four hundred feet in length by seventy-eight feet in width, with a projection at the front measuring twenty feet by fifty feet. Rising three floors in height, with a spacious attic (in which originally was located the crushers), the total floor space is just under three acres. Both the transverse and exterior walls of hand-cut native stone are two feet in thickness. The visitor, after entering through an impressive Roman arch, finds himself in a broad vestibule, flanked on one side by a small sample room and on the other by the old office. Both of these spaces contain the original cedar paneling, which has taken on a soft luster through the years.

In the lounge the high-vaulted ceiling and masonry walls are complemented by the tongue and groove paneling of the huge doors. Here, the Christian Brothers have installed an elevator communicating with the upper floors, as well as tasting facilities where guests may familiarize themselves with the Christian Brothers wines. The solid mahogany bar, gleaming glassware and illuminated displays of wines bespeak the traditional hospitality of the valley vintners.

Open the wrought iron gates, swing back the massive doors to the cellar, and there is revealed row on row of oak casks extending down the two hundred foot length of the north wing of the building. Each cask is approximately two thousand gallons in capacity. All made of imported European white

oak, they are part of the original equipment of the winery. These were coopered on the premises while the building was under construction, and they represent the finest and largest collection of oak casks in the country today.

In the opposite direction from the lounge a similar array of cooperage extends the full length of the building's south wing. These are upright redwood tanks, each of five thousand gallons capacity.

Glancing upward, one cannot escape taking special notice of the ceiling. Throughout the length of the building this consists of a series of concrete arches, each poured individually with a maximum thickness of twenty-six inches, tapering to eight inches at the crown. The base of each arch contains three one-and-one fourth inch twisted steel reinforcement rods extending the width of the building and tying the structure together laterally. The crowns are similarly reinforced. The span is supported on twenty-four foot centers by eight inch steel columns. This (Ransom's Patent) method of ceiling construction was the latest design in industrial construction seventy-five years ago, and is believed to be the first of this type in the west.

To the rear, and outside the west wall of the building proper, is a fourteen foot covered alleyway extending the full length of the structure and opening to the end areas. This, too, is filled with oak cooperage; casks ranging from three thousand to four thousand gallons in capacity. Orig-

inally this passage gave access to a series of tunnels, thirteen in number, cut into the limestone formation of the hillside. Each tunnel was eleven feet high, sixteen feet wide and two hundred-fifty feet in length. It has been said that in constructing the tunnels considerable blasting was done, cracking the roof of the limestone strata and causing excessive seepage and falling rock during wet weather. Hence, in more recent years most of the tunnels have been sealed off and are no longer accessible.

The second floor is a duplication of the first, with respect to the type and arrangement of cooperage. On these two levels, casks and tanks total one million eight-hundred thousand gallons in capacity. Here the ceiling of the center section has been beautifully paneled and lighting fixtures of 19th century design are suspended. Several old hand presses and a crusher dating back to the turn of the century are displayed in this area. Here, too, contained in glass cases, is a very interesting collection of corkscrews assembled by Brother Timothy. Various design features and leverage principles are to be seen. The United States and many foreign countries are represented. Just off this area is a modern laboratory in which samples of each lot of wine are analyzed to keep a watchful eye on quality.

The third floor, where originally were located the fermenting tanks, is today given over entirely to champagne production. Gleaming stainless steel Charmat process pressure

tanks used for the fermentation of champagne dominate the scene. Here, too, the ceiling of the center section of the building has been paneled in mahogany. On the transverse walls are three colored aerial photographs, each measuring ten by twelve feet, showing Greystone, Mont La Salle and Mount Tivy Winery, near Reedley. A fourth frame presents a montage of the nine Christian Brothers high schools in California, plus Mont La Salle and St. Mary's College. The smaller frames show La Salle High School in Pasadena, and St. La Salle primary school at Reedley, both built by the Christian Brothers.

The pictures of the Christian Brothers' schools are very appropriately shown in this location, inasmuch as revenue for their support is derived principally from the Brothers wine and brandy making activities.

But now, returning to the history of the winery. The optimism attending its planning and construction seemed justified. The operation was a success, or so it seemed for a few years. However, already the dreaded phylloxera was creeping into the vineyards of Napa Valley. By 1894 the damage to vineyards was so extensive that no surplus wine existed to cause a marketing problem. In that year Mr. Bourn sold the winery to Mr. Charles Carpy. Shortly thereafter Mr. Carpy, as one of the charter members of the California Wine Association, deeded the property to that organization. During the next fifty years the ownership of Greystone changed

no less than six times. Built for the production of select wines, the winery proved too vast an operation for most private wine producers. Conversely, the compact arrangement of the plant and the fine oak cooperage did not lend itself to efficient operation in production of competitive, or low-priced, wines. In short, Greystone, through the years, became a "white elephant". Maintenance lagged. It is said that some of the fine oak cooperage was taken out and replaced with redwood and that some fell apart from neglect during the Prohibition era. In 1932 this property (whose original construction cost in 1888 was $400,000) sold at auction for $10,000.

In 1942, Greystone was purchased by the Schenley Industries, Inc., owner of Cresta Blanca Wine Company and Roma Wine Company. In 1945 the Christian Brothers commenced leasing space in the cellars, and by 1950 had nearly one million gallons of wine stored there. In April, 1950, the Christian Brothers purchased Greystone outright, together with all cooperage and equipment.

A vigorous program of rehabiliation and modernization was then instituted. This included an entire new roof, extensive paving, and, in 1955, complete facilities for the production of champagne and other sparkling wines. The lounge and tasting bar were added, together with a ninety car parking lot for the accommodation of the thousands of guests visiting the winery each month.

Today Greystone, majestically overlooking the Napa Valley, stands as a monument to past, present and future high quality wines.

APPENDIX IV

THE NAPA VALLEY

by
Carl Wehr

Napa Valley, heart of the northcoast premium wine production area, is as yet relatively uninfluenced by the metropolitan atmosphere. Nestled in the coast range some seventy miles north of San Francisco, the valley presents an air of scenic beauty. Comparatively small, it extends from the tide waters of San Pablo bay northward to the foothills of Mount St. Helena.

The first white settlers arrived in the valley about 1825, but no appreciable growth in the population took place until early in the 1840's. With the arrival of many emigrant families, considerable agricultural development took place, principally in grain and livestock farming. The Old Bale Mill, three miles north of St. Helena, was built in 1846. The town of St. Helena was founded in 1854, followed by Calistoga (formerly known as Hot Springs) in 1859. A railroad serving the valley was completed in 1868.

The story of Napa Valley is closely allied with the development of the wine industry in this region. Viticulture on a commercial basis dates back some one hundred years. Although highly successful in California, the growing of the

vitis vinifera species of grapes in other regions of the United States met with repeated failure. Indeed, from the beginning of colonial times, shortly after the settlement of Jamestown, numerous attempts were made by the wine growing interests of the Old World to establish vineyards on the eastern seaboard. In the latter part of the 18th century, the Franciscan Fathers, migrating north from Mexico, planted vines near their missions. With the success of these plantings came the discovery that here in California were soil and climatic conditions rivaling those of the famous wine growing regions of Europe.

In Napa Valley the first vineyards were planted in the 1850's. In 1861 Colonel Agoston Haraszthy, often called the father of California viticulture, headed a commission appointed by Governor John Downey to study wine growing in Europe as the means of developing the potential of the industry in California. This commission returned with many thousands of cuttings numbering several hundred varieties, collected from all the principal wine growing regions of Europe and the Middle East.

So successfully did the vines thrive, and so high was the quality of the wines made from the grapes, that it soon became apparent that the Napa Valley had the soil and climatic conditions required to produce wines comparable to those of Europe. As a result the plantings reached a total of eleven thousand acres in 1880.

But all was not well in this seeming paradise. Creeping into the valley was the scourge, phylloxera. This insect pest, sometimes called a root louse, was first identified in the vineyards of France about 1858. Investigation revealed that the origin of this insect was on American soil, where the pest fed on the roots of the wild American grape vine. Inadvertently introduced to the European vineyards, it attacked the roots of the vitis vinifera species of grapes. Its devastating affect was not realized until whole vineyards commenced dying off. By importing infected vines from Europe to California, the bug was transferred to our local vineyards.

With thousands of acres of producing vineyards in the valley, phylloxera made its sudden and devastating appearance about 1890. Within a short period of time practically all the vineyards, not only in Northern California, but in the temperate climatic regions of Europe, were laid waste. A vigorous program of research to conquer phylloxera was instituted by the California State Agriculture Department and the University of California, together with federal agencies and bureaus of foreign governments. It was determined that the root of the wild American grape was resistant to the phylloxera; and, furthermore, that the vitis vinifera species of vine could be successfully grafted to the wild grape root stock. A program of replanting and grafting was instituted, and the success of this practice is attested to

today by the fact that most vineyards in temperate climates throughout the world are growing on the root stock of the wild American grape. However, with respect to Napa Valley, the era of phylloxera resulted in large acreages being returned to pasture land, or planted to prunes and walnuts.

Another serious setback in wine growing in California, which, in many respects was as damaging to the economy, was the era of Prohibition. Vineyards were torn out, wineries closed down and went bankrupt, fine old cooperage -- irreplaceable -- was allowed to dry out and collapse; the science of enology was neglected with the resultant loss to the industry of a generation of winemakers. The most detrimental effect by far was the loss of a generation of wine users and their appreciation of fine table wines. Years of persistent effort on the part of the California Wine Advisory Board, the Wine Institute, independent wine growers and distributors, are today restoring the fine wines of California to their proper place in the diet and social consciousness of the American people.

Once again fine wines, their growing and production, have become a vital force in the life and economy of the Napa Valley.

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Rev. 5-7-73/pmw

PRAYERS

HARVEST LUNCHEON PRAYER

by

Brother Timothy, F.S.C.
Cellarmaster
The Christian Brothers Winery

October 23, 1969

O, great God of the universe, who created stars, moon, sun and planets, and set them on their immense but precise paths, You are the same God who created the microscopic yeast cells and placed them on the skins of ripening grapes, so that, when crushed, the sweet grape juice comes in contact with these living yeast cells and they ferment the grape sugars into grape alcohol, changing what was grape juice into wine.

We ask You, O God, to bless us and to bless the fine foods and wines that you have made available to us, and which we are about to share with each other. Amen.

Grape Stomper's Grace

Bless this bread and wine O Lord and all of us who eat and drink together.

BLESSING

O Great God, Creator of a Universe so immense that our most brilliant scientists, capable of sending men to the moon and bringing them back home again, are unable to measure its extent, You are the same God who made the microscopic yeast cells that convert grape juice into wine. Benjamin Franklin, while wondering about the mysterious process of fermentation, once said:

"Wine ... a constant proof that God
loves us and loves to see us happy."

We ask you O God to bless us and the foods and wines we are about to enjoy.

###

THANKSGIVING

In your solicitude for us, O God, you have made it possible for farmers, fishermen and others to bring to our dining tables a perennial supply of foods and beverages. The miracle of the loaves and fishes is repeated every day. We thank Thee, O God, for this bounty and ask you to look with love on farmers, fishermen and all of us.

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INDEX -- Brother Timothy
(Appendices are not indexed in detail)

advertising, 41
Alemany, Joseph Sadoc (Archbishop), 3
Allegretti, Joseph, 66, 67, 68
altar wines. See sacramental wines.
Amerine, Maynard A., 7
Archinal, Herman L., 48
Assumption Abbey winery, 73
Azarie, Brother, 4

Bailey, C.E., 45
Bank of America, 54, 55
Basil, Brother, 4
Bechtel and Company, 45
beers, 49
Benkiser, August, 11, 63
Benkiser, Justus, 63
Beringer Brothers, 42
Biane, Philo, 16, 73
Bisceglia Brothers winery, 49, 53, 54
Boone, Mrs. Elsa [Gier], 10
Botsford Ketchum, 41
Bourn, William, 52
brandy, 22, 25, 27, 41-44, 49, 50, 72, 73, 88
Brandy Advisory Board, 50
Brotherhood winery, 73
Brothers of the Christian Schools, 12
Bush, ___, 13-14

California Wine Association, 53, 57, 59-60
Carpy, C.A., 52, 53
Carpy, Charles, 52, 53
cartons, 82
Cathedral High School, Los Angeles, 16
Cecilian, Brother, 4, 5
Central California Wineries, Inc., 54, 55
Charles Henry, Brother, 1
Charmat process, 66-69
Chinese coolies, 52
Christian Brothers label, 38
Christian Brothers order, passim
Christian Brothers High School, Sacramento, 18

Christian Brothers Wine and Champagne Cellar, 51, 55, Appendix III
closures. See: corks and screw caps
cooperage, 24
corks, 82, 91-92, 93
corkscrews, 94-102, 103-104
Cresta Blanca Plant #2, 50, 55
Cresta Blanca winery, Livermore, 59-60, 61
Cresta Blanca label, 60
Critchfield, Burke H., 55
Cruess, William V., 33, 35

De La Salle Institute, 5, 6, 8, 22
de la Salle, Jean Baptiste [St.], 1, 2, 12, 22
Depression, The 10, 14, 24, 27, 86
dessert wines, 7, 8, 38, 70, 71, 91
Diener, Al, 15
Diener, Anthony George (Brother Timothy), 15, 17
Diener family, 15, 16, 18, 19-20

Elk Park Ranch, 63

Federspiel, Sophus, 65
Forni, Carlo and Alfred, 46
Forni, Charles, vineyards, 45
Franciscan order, 1
Franklin, Benjamin, 76, 78
Frederick, Brother, 16, 50
Fresno State College, 37
Fromm, Alfred, 23, 25, 26, 27, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 77
Fromm, Norman, 102
Fromm & Sichel, 25, 26, 27, 38, 39, 40, 41, 47, 74, 77, 102
Fruit Industries [Ltd.], 42, 53

General Viticulture, 70
Gier, Amelie, 10
Gier, Theodore, 10, 11, 24, 25, 28, 29, 57-66, 70
Golan and Lango (label), 54
Golan, Louis, 54
grape concentrate, 88
"Grape Stompers' Grace," 78
Gregory, Brother, 16, 17, 18, 50
Gregory, Brother (Provincial), 18, 19
Greystone Cellars, 50, 51, 52, 54, 55, 57, 62, 66, 82, 83, 101,
Appendix II, Appendix III
Guild Wine Company, 60

Hercules filter, 68
Hilgardia, 70
Hoffman, John, 46
Hoffman, Stanley S. See John, Brother
Howe, Ed, 99
Howe, Jim, 99-101
Hoyt, Frances C., 45
Hoyt ranch, 45
Hudemann, Herman, 28, 29, 30-31

Italian Swiss Colony, 67

Jesuit order, 1, 73
John, Brother, 25-26, 33, 35, 36, 38, 40, 43, 44, 46, 69
Jordan, Rudolf, 28, 29, 30, 33
Jordan, Rudolf, Jr., 28, 30, 31, 32-33
Joslyn, Maynard, 7

Keith and Associates, Santa Rosa, 46
kosher wines, 7
Krug, Charles, 52

labels, 23, 41
Landor, Walter, 41
La Salle Products, Inc., 9, 22
"Lotus Farm," 30
Lotus Vineyard, Napa County, California, 1893 (album), 28

Martinez novitiate, 3, 5, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 18, 20, 25, 35
Masson, Paul, winery, 74, 90
Mattei, A. & Sons, 42
medicinal wines, 6, 8, 39
Merchants Exchange of Oakland, 64
Meyer, Justin (formerly Brother Justin), 5-6, Appendix I
Mittleberger, Ernest, 103
Mont La Salle, 10, 12, 13, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 28, 29, 38, 45, 47, 58, 62, 65, 79, 81, 83
Mont La Salle label, 38
Mont La Salle Vineyards, 12, 16, 22, 23
Montelindo Recuerdo Vintage (wine label), 30
Morrow, A.R. (label), 42
"Mount" La Salle (label), 23. See also Mont La Salle
Mount Tivy Winery, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48-49, 90
Muirson Label [company], 41

Niehoff, Walter, 41
Novitiate winery, 73

Oakland Inquirer, 65
Olmo, Harold P., 70
O-Neh-Da winery, Conesus, New York, 73

pasteurization, 54-55
Peralta Winery, 49
Picker-Linz Importers, Inc., 23, 25, 27, 38, 47
Pirio, Auguste, 66
Powers, Lucius, 46
Prayers, Grace and Thanksgiving, 77-79, Appendix V
prices, 87-90
Principles and Practices of Wine Making, 33
Prohibition, 6, 8, 9. 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 27, 34, 51, 54, 57, 58, 61, 62, 64
propylene glycol solution, 69
prorate, 41
Publicker Industries, 88-89

raisins, 86
Raphael, Brother, 14, 25, 35, 36, 40
Repeal, 15, 21, 33, 40, 53, 54
Roesch, Louis Company, 30
Roosevelt, Franklin, 15, 21
Rosenthal, Phil,. 45
Ruby Hill vineyard, 60

sacramental wines, 6, 7, 8, 21, 39
St. Helena Star, 56
St. Mary's College, 2, 3, 18, 19, 20, 25
St. Mary's High School, Oakland, 16, 18
St. Mary's residence school, Mont La Salle, 47
St. Timothy, 75
Salesian order, 1
Schenley, 55, 60
Schiefelbein, Hubert. See Gregory, Brother
Schools, Christian Brothers, 1-3
Scott, Richard W., 45
screw caps, 91-92
Seagrams, 46, 47, 48, 74
Sequoia Vineyard, 58, 64

Sempervirens (poem), 32-33
set-aside, 41, 88-89
Setrakian, Arpaxat ("Sox"), 88
Sichel, Franz, 103
Smith, Al, 15, 21
Sommer, Frank, 20
Sommer, Mrs. Frank, 20
South St. Helena winery, 45, 46, 51, 79-83, 87
"Spout Farm," 30
Stamps, commemorative, 12
Sunny St. Helena Winery, 46

table wines, 8, 38, 70, 91
tanks, wine, 44, 45, 59
tax, brandy, 42
Taylor, Stanley, Company, 62
Tedeschi, Gus, 67
Trepp, Leo, 7

Ulfinian, Brother, 14
United Farm Workers Union, 72
University of California, 36, 37
University of California, Berkeley, 33
University of California, Davis, 13, 37, 75

Vasconi, Joe, 99
Victorick, Brother, 4
vintage dating, 85
vodka, 48

Wehr, Carl, 52, 55-56
Wehr, Mrs. Carl, 56
Wente, Ernest, 101
Wente, Herman, 101
Wine Museum, San Francisco, 102-103
Wheeler, William, 45
whiskeys, 49-50
White, Rose, 45
Wine Advisory Board, 50, 74-75
Wine Institute, 50, 74-75, 94, 95, 96
Wine Institute technical advisory committee, 36, 75
Wine Review, 94
Winkler, A.[lbert], J., 70

Woerner, David, 61
Wurz, Louis, 45

yeast culture, 36

Wines Mentioned in the Interview

burgundy, 23, 65
Cabernet sauvignon, 85
champagne, 51, 66-69, 83, 93
Chateau La Salle, 22, 69-70
Chenin blanc, 71
MelosoCream Sherry, 71
muscatel, 39
Pineau de la Loire, 70-71
Pinot St. George, 70
port, 38-39, 71
sherry, 38-39, 71
Tinta Cream Port, 71

Grape Varieties Mentioned in the Interview

Alicante Ganzin, 10-11
Cabernet Sauvignon, 10
Chenin blanc, 71
Franken Riesling, 10
Johannisberg Riesling, 10
"Petit Pinot," 70
Pineau de la Loire, 71
Pinot Noir, 70
Pinot St. George, 10, 70
Sylvaner Riesling, 10
Thompson Seedless, 72, 88, 89

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